Story 3-1 『Chance』

“Let’s buy weapons!” (Tamaki)

That was the first thing she said. Tamaki was in a cheerful mood, so she proposed it.

I did break my sword and Shuri’s dagger was chipped so it was a good idea.

As amateurs using them so roughly in combat, it was to be expected.

“This is a good time to buy weapons~! Don’t you agree?” (Tamaki)

“What’s that? Even though you wouldn’t listen to me.” (Shuri)

“I don’t want to recognize the meek and obedient Yui-chan’s opinions, staring at him with those warm dere eyes.” (Tamaki)

“… Hmph, is that so…” (Shuri)

Their expressions relaxed into grins as they turned towards me.

These two; their behavior towards each other reverted to close friends after the battle against Fantra and the awkward mood lessened considerably.

Because of that my chances to talk with Shuri decreased though.

I can profit from Shuri by purposely letting these two shop by themselves.

Perhaps, tonight… if Shuri remembers the promise… it will be that kind of day. If I preserved this good mood, would it be selfish to receive it tonight?

“It’s not like that wasn’t the plan. Well, we have money from capturing the dungeon, so go buy something. Besides… look.” (Daichi)

I quickly gestured at the red horned demon behind me with my thumb. Leadred’s eyes blazed with childlike innocence.

Her reaction showed how much she loved fighting. She wanted to look at weapons, so there was no helping that she would go to look at them.

Seeing her appearance, Tamaki agreed. Today’s plan was decided.

“It’s settled, then. I’ll go around with Shuri-chan, and Katsuragi enjoy time with Leadred.” (Tamaki)

“Objection!” (Daichi)

Emphasizing it, I objected.

“Why are you the one making decisions? Shuri will always go with me.” (Daichi)

I pulled Shuri's hand and embraced her.

"… Ah. Daichi-sama…" (Shuri)

Seeing her expression, my determination was reaffirmed. I won't hand her over today. Normally I would let her but definitely not today!

"Ah-! I thought you'd say that! I admit that Shuri-chan likes you, but this is different!" (Tamaki)

"Are you Shuri's mother!? I like Shuri. Shuri likes me. You don't need a reason for a couple to go around town together." (Daichi)

"I also want to slowly spend time alone with my close friend!" (Tamaki)

"Therefore, saying something like that I also-" (Daichi)

"On the way back here, every day, who were the ones being flirty from morning to noon to night~? Making us endure seeing that! I almost vomited sugar!" (Tamaki)

Leadred nodded her head with a [Un Un]. Remembering that, Shuri smiled while embarrassed.

Somehow or another I didn't have any allies in this. Nothing could be done but to use my last resort.

"That's fine, Tamaki. I'll use『Absolute Command』to teach you a lesson of my greatness." (Daichi)

"That's cheating! Do you have no pride as a man!?" (Tamaki)

We glared at each other. Feeling the situation was escalate, I felt a bloodcurdling presence like cold water was splashed on my head from in front of me.

Wanting to buy weapons, Leadred who had been made to wait started urging us with her glance.

"… Will you stop fighting?" (Leadred)

The pressure from Leadred's presence caused Tamaki's face to turn blue.

"… That's so. However, what will we do? I don't want to separate from Shuri." (Daichi)

"I also don't want to." (Tamaki)

"U-um, you two… we could decide it with rock paper scissors? Whoever comes out with the same result as another is a pair? How about it?" (Shuri)

As we were beginning to repeat the same thing again, Shuri proposed a compromise.

I see. It's impossible to cheat, and was entirely left to luck. It was impossible to complain at any result.

"I'm fine with that." (Tamaki)

"I also don't mind. Leadred?" (Daichi)

"You want me to join the rock paper scissors? Well, I'll go with the extra person because I don't understand it. Or rather, as long as I can look at the weapons anything is fine." (Leadred)

"If that's the case, it's fine." (Daichi)

Shuri's fluttering hand had already been taken by Tamaki, whose face was brimming with confidence.

Predictions wouldn't matter. The one to win the date with Shuri will definitely be me!

"Alright, let's start! Rock, paper!" (Daichi)

"""""Scissors!!""""" (Daichi, Shuri, Tamaki)

Each of us threw out our hands that would decide our fates.

◇◆◇◆◇◆◇◆◇◆

Now, we were in an industrial blacksmithing area called Russell. It was in the opposite direction of the Royal Palace from the【Labyrinth of the Sleeping Trance】.

However, we were far away. It was a five day's walk. Without even a village from there to here, we were stuck with just portable rations and water summoned by magic, but with our experience from【Rigal's Den】 we didn't starve.

On the way back from the labyrinth we encountered a thief boss and took his head, so his followers listened to what we said and carried out baggage as well as hand over all of their money. Never again would they try to do that. After doing something like that, it felt good. Very good.

"T-that way has something that looks like delicious yakitori! The price is fine, buy it!" (—)

It turned out that I was paired with this person…

"Why did I have to pair up with you…" (Daichi)

Muttering that, my feet moved to the stall slowly.

"You said it yourself. It's an unlucky day, unlucky." (—)

The results from the rock paper scissors, paper (Me), paper (Tamaki), scissors (Shuri), had me pair with Tamaki, the worst possible pair from the lots.

Though we both demanded a redo, we saw Shuri smile with eyes that held no laughter and Leadred's glare abandoning us.

Shuri and Leadred went to the left, and Tamaki and I went to the right, with a promise to gather in the central plaza at six o'clock when the evening is over and started after about ten minutes.

Tamaki and I immediately, mutually, complained.

Haa, Tamaki sighed. I feel the same.

"… Anyway, there's no use in complaining now… hey." (Tamaki)

Tamaki held out her small white hand. Though I understood her intention, I ignored it.

"… W-what are you doing? Hurry up and take it." (Tamaki)

"Why?" (Daichi)

"I'm trying to be a substitute for Shuri-chan. Don't you understand?" (Tamaki)

"… Well… you aren't suited to be a substitute for Shuri." (Daichi)

"You're always so fussy. Listen up, escort me. Why don't you treat me as Shuri-chan and tomorrow ask her on a date?" Tamaki)

"Eh? It's fine?" (Daichi)

I wasn't able to hide my surprise from Tamaki's unexpected remark.

"Unfortunately, I understand that Shuri-chan's feelings towards you were not from being compelled. There's no way that I would be a hindrance." (Tamaki)

"Wasn't the obstruction from a bit ago a little cruel?" (Daichi)

When I replied with my justifiable opinion, Tamaki lost her composure and became flustered.

"T-that's… That's because if Katsuragi doesn't rehearse it beforehand, he'd make a blunder. If that happened Shuri-chan's mood would turn to the worst, and that's no good. After all, Katsuragi has never had a girlfriend." (Tamaki)

"No, I've had one." (Daichi)

"From a manga probably." (Tamaki)

"… … …" (Daichi)

I had no words to respond with.

“Because I am experienced in these things.” (Tamaki)

“… Wasn’t that your first kiss?” (Daichi)

“Fue-!?” (Tamaki)

Tamaki blushed immediately, panicking timidly. This person has been hectic for a while now.

“D-don’t say that! That sort of thing wasn’t a kiss! I mean, Katsuragi! Won’t you take responsibility? You took my first kiss.” (Tamaki)

“The imperfect society of this world approves of polygamy.” (Daichi)

“… Eh? Ah, you’ll take responsibility…?” (Tamaki)

“Yeah, Shuri will be happy if you are there.” (Daichi)

Though from the beginning I never planned to part with someone I made into a slave. Unlike Rin Wade’s ordinary level whose level would never surpass mine, a hero like Tamaki will someday become resistant to Absolute Command.

At that time, it would be more convenient for her to be close to me.

… Well, I wonder if it will be okay if it’s this person, I locked this feeling away inside my chest.

“I-is that so… You’re taking responsibility… t-then, I can feel at ease, yeah.” (Tamaki) [TN: Lit. ‘yeah’ = ‘un’]

Why does Tamaki seem to be so glad from that? It seems I’ll have to rethink this girl…

Or I might not be able to enjoy time with Shuri.

“Hey, hey, let’s hurry and go to that arms shop? There are good quality weapons inside, they are cheap!” (Tamaki)

“Ah, oi!” (Daichi)

Tamaki grabbed my right hand and advanced ahead, pushing a few people out of the way. Her hair waved in the wind, and I saw her laughing face break into a smile from behind.

“Come to think of it, Katsuragi uses a one handed sword right?” (Tamaki)

“That’s right… why?” (Daichi)

“Here, you aren’t carrying a shield.” (Tamaki)

“Hahaha. Don’t make me laugh, Tamaki.” (Daichi) [TN: ‘Tamaki’ read as ‘Shield’]

“Fine, don’t move, I’m going to fix your face back to your ugly one.” (Tamaki)

Our conversation carried on in this beautiful style while we were choosing our weapons.

I bought a longsword and a dagger, while Tamaki bought one hundred throwing knifes. Taking her style into consideration I didn’t complain.

“Where should we go next? We have plenty time left.” (Daichi)

“Then, shouldn’t we go buy potions and elixirs? When we fought Fantra, we had almost no magic remaining.” (Tamaki)

“… That’s right.” (Daichi)

Lowering my eyelids, I clearly remembered the fierce fighting from the other day. It was a considerably hard fight.

I heard later, Shuri’s magic also almost ran out like Tamaki’s…

To prepare for the worst situation, I learned that it would be good to have a means to commit suicide from the fight against Fantra.

We need to buy a few Yanu leaves to replenish our stock.

“I don’t mind. For those, how about we go to the Adventurer’s Guild?” (Daichi)

“Right… Ah, wasn’t I supposed to be dead? Won’t it be bad to go to the guild?” (Tamaki)

“It shouldn’t be a problem. There are fools everywhere spreading news like『The Hero that should defeat the Demon King died before fighting with the Demon King』.” (Daichi)

However, that relies on Hayase telling the story to Ginger. However, she will do it. To do me—Yuji-san—a favor.

“Is that so… oh well.” (Tamaki)

“Therefore, it is fine. Hey, let’s go.” (Daichi)

“Roger!” (Tamaki)

Tamaki and I, for different reasons, decided to head to the Adventurer’s Guild.

◇◆◇◇◆◇◆◇◆◇◆

The Adventurer’s Guild is located in front of Russell’s central plaza. It tries to distract Russell’s guests from the left and right sides from whatever they are doing and go into it.

The left side that Shuri went to is for the wealthy, whereas the right side that we are in is for civilians such as adventurers.

Therefore, this Adventurer's Guild is in the center.

Though are first impressions were that it looked like the last one, it was much larger as we approached. Ignoring the bar, it sold goods required to capture the dungeon, though sales were on the second floor, and quests were given on the first floor's lobby. In addition, it seemed adventurers could book low costing rooms.

However, Russell's Adventurer's Guild had a strange atmosphere. A bloodthirsty atmosphere seemed to waft through the air. Because women's figures were practically never seen there.

Adventurers were at the reception counter as well. Only then did I see the receptionist lady that was like a breath of fresh air in the dirty guild.

"Thank you for waiting. Here is your order of twenty potions and ten elixirs." (Receptionist Lady)

"Thank you very much… Um." (Daichi)

"What is it?" (Receptionist Lady)

"Is something happening, here? The air here seems interesting." (Daichi)

"You don't know?" (Receptionist Lady)

When I asked the receptionist-sama—her nametag had Miare written on it—her jade green eyes focused on me.

"Yeah, well. I just came to this town." (Daichi)

"Is that so? … Though it is an embarrassing matter…" (Miare)

Confirming that no one was around us, Miare taught us a secret matter.

"Recently, there's been a party of people from the capital called Heroes… it hasn't been easy but they have been advancing floors one by one in the【Scorching Execution Ground】… it seems he brought a female adventurer with him." (Miare)

Like always, I can't ignore this. In short I cherry pick the information, jealously, and become soured. However, still.

"… …Hero?" (Daichi)

So. I reacted to this word with hypersensitivity this time. Behind me, Tamaki's body quivered.

I will not let this chance escape.

"Heh… what's the name of the hero?" (Daichi)

Miare-san didn't seem to pay particular attention and told us the name.

The moment I heard the name, both the anger that had been accumulating in my gut for a long time and the resulting laughter at the chance of meeting him welled into my throat.

“It was… Samejima, I think. In addition to Samjima, there was one named Kishima that came… customer? Are you alright?” (Miare)

A mischievous angel, or a devil’s trap?

For me it would be the former, which would make the latter for him.

“Ah, no, I’m sorry. Just a little, I felt in a good mood. I owe a great deal to them.” (Daichi)

A really, really large debt. Tormented, thrown away, killed… one life won’t be enough for him to pay it back.

“Heeeh, really? That’s good then. Being able to meet them again.” (Miare)

“Yeah, really—I’ll finally be able to repay them.” (Daichi)

I naturally had an evil smile at the thought of the future.

Having fun couldn’t be helped. Like a child given a toy he wanted.

I’m looking forward to it.

With his sword in hand, at that time he will be dyed in crimson—.

When Tamaki and I received our items, we hurried towards the central plaza.

What to do? I decided.

On that guy, everything will be for the sake of———revenge.

Story 3-2『Approaching the Distance』

Samejima came to this town. He came. That fact stirred me.

How should I kill him? First of all, I can't go wrong by heading to the dungeon.

Beat him to death, poison him, strangle him, or kill him with my sword. The idea of getting revenge on him played over and over in my head.

However, it seems that due to that my judgement dulled. Though I rushed to the central plaza, it was natural that even though I wanted to tell her, Shuri wasn't there yet.

"… Katsuragi… for a minute there, you were acting strange. Just how much of a grudge to you bear against Samejima… at least hold back your blood thirst while we're in town." (Tamaki)

Catching up to him, Tamaki gave advice. For her to notice I must have been running at a considerable speed.

"… It's not like I don't understand your feelings but… what will you do?" (Tamaki)

"I'll get revenge. For me, and for Shuri who were thrown away and killed." (Daichi)

"It isn't the time for that, yet!" (Tamaki)

Tamaki suddenly brought the clock on her wrist close to me. The long hand was at the twelve, and the hour hand at the five. It was an hour until the promised time.

I glanced around and saw that people were staring at me strangely.

It was obvious that I looked out of place.

"… Ah–, sorry. I seem to have been in a rush for a moment there." (Daichi)

"Rushing is a taboo, carelessness as well. Even then, to kill him without being discovered." (Tamaki)

I thought as Tamaki spoke.

I had dashed out without thinking about anything once I heard that there was a chance at killing him. Strategies as well, same with countermeasures.

Samejima was also a Hero. Furthermore, he was Claria's favorite.

Certainly, Tamaki's level needed to catch up to mine and Shuri's, and possibly Leadred's. [TN: This is worded awkwardly in the raw from what I can tell…]

If we went about this poorly, my head would probably be splattered.

"… Thank you, Tamaki. I've calmed down." (Daichi)

“… It was nothing. I didn’t forget how worried we’d be if you died on us.” (Tamaki)

“It took courage say that.” (Daichi)

“… Well, don’t think about it too much.” (Tamaki)

Tamaki pinched my cheek with all her strength. It hurt.

“… … What are you doing?” (Daichi)

“I’m making my brother, who’s still making an evil face, smile.” (Tamaki) [TN: She uses ‘onii-san’]

She continued to speak.

“Shuri-chan wants to see Katsuragi’s smiling face. Leadred-san too. After all I… so, Katsuragi… I understand that are circumstances I don’t know, though a part of me… unexpectedly I eagerly want it as well.” (Tamaki)

Tamaki seemed to regret coming along with me. Despite that, she spoke to humbly request something.

“It’s okay continue as always. You can’t afford to rush like when you killed me… when we come across them, I won’t mind it even if you rip them into shreds or fill them with holes. No one would complain, won’t be allowed to, nor be able to. I promise. So… isn’t it alright to be at ease for a little longer?” (Tamaki)

“… … The preaching of a former bully won’t move my heart.” (Daichi)

“So bothersome… even though I look like this I’ve reflected on those things… no, I still haven’t finished reflecting.” (Tamaki)

Tamaki stopped playing with my cheek and bowed from her waist.

“I am very sorry.” (Tamaki)

What she gave was an apology.

“I… was just trying to go along with what other people were doing… no, that would only be an excuse wouldn’t it? I don’t think you’ll forgive what I did. However, I wanted to let you know how I feel. U-usually I am sarcastic so, umm, please pardon that for a little… Being open in front of Katsuragi… well, it’s enjoyable to talk. A-anyhow, I hurt you! I promoted hurting you, I am so sorry!!” (Tamaki)

Once again, Tamaki bowed her head deeply.

… … What do I want from her? What should I think?

I searched every nook of my heart… and couldn’t find anything to say, all of the resentment I’d held towards her was gone.

Tamaki might be lying and apologizing for her life, I doubted her.

However, curiously I didn't think she was lying.

The stones that filled my mind with unease fell.

I wasn't thinking, I mean—about things like that.

"… Tamaki." (Daichi)

"… …" (Tamaki)

"Please, raise your head." (Daichi)

"… … Okay." (Tamaki)

Tamaki did as she was told. I caught her off guard and embraced her. Tamaki lost her balance and leaned toward me.

"… Eh, ah, eh?" (Tamaki)

"Tamaki. It's embarrassing, but will you hear my answer even if it is bad?" (Daichi)

"Ah, y-yes…" (Tamaki)

Tamaki shut her eyes firmly.

She didn't want to hear it, she was probably afraid.

And so, I said it.

I include her in my revenge.

"I do not forgive you." (Daichi)

"…–" (Tamaki)

The sound of her losing her breath reached my ears. Understanding my answer, Tamaki tried to move away. However, I didn't let her go.

Additionally, I added strength to the hold.

"K-Katsuragi?" (Tamaki)

"I will say it again. I do not forgive you. Therefore, I have the right to get revenge on you for a long time. Do you disagree?" (Daichi)

"… I don't disagree. To that extent, I will accept any demand." (Tamaki)

"Then, stay beside me." (Daichi)

“… … … eh?” (Tamaki)

“Don’t you understand? Are you an idiot? I will punish you. You will respond. Therefore you will need to stay beside me for a lifetime. Though it may be bad luck for you, the spot on my left has a vacancy.

It’s needless to say who is filling the spot on my right.

“Therefore, you will be near me. Forever until I am satisfied.” (Daichi)

I talked rapidly, and told her everything I wanted to say. It’s not because I was embarrassed.

Yeah, it’s different. Thinking that I’ll tell my feelings, it ended up like this. So, now, it isn’t necessary to regret. I don’t need to add to my dark memories…!

I asked to deceive my feelings.

“Are you prepared?” (Daichi)

“… … …” (Tamaki)

Tamaki completely entrusted her delicate body to me, feeling timid, put her hands on my back and answered weakly.

“…Thank you, Katsuragi.” (Tamaki)

“…Don’t worry about it. We are equals now. I also killed you.” (Daichi)

“This… reconciliation… is it done?” (Tamaki)

“I said that I haven’t forgiven you.” (Daichi)

“… That’s right. I will stay forever to be forgiven.” (Tamaki)

… What is that supposed to mean? Depending on how I take it I can understand that as a proposal…

… Either way, I don’t care because I’m not letting go of her.

“… Because I’m a persistent, tenacious guy, I am confident that I won’t forgive you for life.” (Daichi)

“… Is that a proposal?” (Tamaki)

“You too, wasn’t that a proposal earlier?” (Daichi)

“… … … Secret.” (Tamaki)

I heard her murmur that under her breath.

“Then, mine is also a secret… Say, shouldn’t we look for a place to stay? … Staying like this for too long is embarrassing.” (Daichi)

“… Oh well. I wonder what Shuri-chan would do if she saw—“ (Tamaki)

Tamaki, who began to move away from me stopped suddenly. Her mouth barely managing to open and close.

Though she didn’t say anything, I roughly understand what she was trying to say.

This doesn’t make me a bad person… no, I’m not doing anything bad.

… Well then, how can I return to normal the mood of the girl behind me? I turned around, still searching for the best idea.

“Katsuragi-kun and Yui-chan…? Shall we… have a little chat? For now, why don’t we look for a room for us three to be alone?” (Shuri)

… … This could be bad.

◇◆◇◆◇◆◇◆◇◆

We met earlier than planned and chose two double rooms. It’s needless to say why I deliberately did not rent a four-person room.

This time they were more luxurious than common rooms. Although was is a place where you would want to heal by jumping into a soft bed, Tamaki and I were told to sit on the hard floor.

Two hours had already passed. We were running on the third hour.

“Leadred and I learned information about Samejima, so we rushed to meet you two and by no means were we hiding…” (Shuri)

“No, you have it wrong, Shuri-chan. It didn’t mean anything in particular.” (Tamaki)

“Yui-chan? It’s no good to lie. Woman’s intuition is an amazing thing you know?” (Shuri)

“… … … Okay.” (Tamaki)

Tamaki fell silent in the presence of an aura that did not allow talking.

“…Shuri. I want you to hear me out a little. First of all, Shuri is my number one. Please understand that will never change.” (Daichi)

“Yes, I also love Daichi the most.” (Shuri)

“Then-“ (Daichi)

“However, this is different. I have asked many times since earlier “Why was that kind of thing done?”… Yui-chan understands what I mean right?” (Shuri)

“… … … Yeah.” (Tamaki)

Tamaki nodded in resignation. Then, gave me a sidelong glance. Her gaze went back and forth between Shuri and me.

“What’s on your mind?” (Shuri)

“… A-about that, could it be later, with just the two of us…?” (Tamaki)

Tamaki had her head on the floor. Prostrating. She put all of her sincerity into it. She really wanted to be pardoned.

“Yeah, that’s fine. Then, Yui-chan and Leadred-san should go wait over there in that room.” (Shuri)

“T-thank you!” (Tamaki)

Shuri was no demon. With her feelings firmly transmitted to Tamaki, she released her.

… Huh? Then, why wasn’t I released after telling you how I felt, Shuri-chan?

Though, that problem was immediately resolved.

“… Well, Daichi-sama… Please come here.” (Shuri)

Shuri tapped the spot next to her with a *PonPon*.

Following her instructions, I groaned as Shuri placed her head on my lap.

Without changing, she turned and embraced my waist with her arms.

We locked eyes. Shuri diverted her gaze first.

“Ah, Shuri?” (Daichi)

“We are finally alone. With this… we can do it with peace of mind, right, Daichi-sama?” (Shuri)

Shuri guessed my intention. She understood immediately, didn’t she?

Those upturned eyes are sneaky. Though it was unpleasant, my eagerness overflowed.

“… Ah.” (Shuri)

Shuri also seemed to notice that part of my body changing. Her ears and cheeks were dyed in a bright red.

“I’m happy. By me… so…” (Shuri)

“… Shuri. At least, endure it until later tonight.” (Daichi)

“That’s no good. To the extent you cherished Yui-chan, please pour Daichi-sama’s love onto me as well.” (Shuri)

Shuri’s approach was intense as she was jealous of her friend.

Shuri began to take off her usual maid clothes. When she removed her frilly skirt, she began to undo the buttons of her top one by one to tease me.

Before long, her pale pink underwear and white skin were exposed.

“… Daichi-sama…” (Shuri)

Shuri sat comfortably between my knees.

A sweet scent tickled my nose. I saw her nape from the gap in her hair. Unsuitable for her age, her childlike body was before my eyes.

Shuri took my hands and moved them to her breasts.

“…Nn-…” (Shuri)

She let out a weak breath. She was too captivating, the limits of my self-control were instantly passed.

Embracing Shuri’s body, I turned around and pushed her down.

Soft lips. A perfectly modeled face like glass that seemed as though it would break from a touch. In her pupils dwelled insecurity and a large expectation.

They seemed to captivate me and draw me in.

“… Be gentle.” (Shuri)

Once I heard that… my reasoning could no longer hold out.

I hung over Shuri.

Story 3-3『Acquiring Information』

It was skillfully done for our first time together, though apart from that there was nothing in particular other than going for three rounds. My impressions… I won't talk about much.

However as a brief comment… Shuri was amazing, I guess? She was considerably proactive, and the final round became a scramble for leadership. Though I won by betting my pride as a man.

We went to Leadred's room and began talking about our plans for the future. The topic of discussion was『Do we kill Samejima first?』, not『Do we capture the dungeon first?』.

According to the advice I received from the goddess there seems to be two people who will join me.

Then, capturing the dungeon's priority went up as it would overwhelmingly increase the success rate of getting revenge.

So, we immediately came to a conclusion. We would prioritize capturing the dungeon.

The problem was Samejima's henchmen.

"Assuming that we kill Kijima… what about Sajima…?" (Daichi)

Right, Sajima Nanami. She holds the healer position in Samejima's party and is a character that is nice to everyone, and whose figure is generally popular amongst the year's female students.

Though she seldom became involved with me, she was also in the usual classification as Hayase.

I clearly remember her figure watching me being harshly bullied.

I don't know why such beautiful girls fall in love with Samejima.

"Nanami is… well, I don't want her to be killed." (Tamaki)

Tamaki rose her hand up timidly and gave her opinion.

"Ah–… I understand what you mean but…" (Daichi)

I also don't want to kill Sajima. However, unless we can make her powerless, Samejima's magic and stamina will endlessly be recovered.

Otherwise our situation would get worse and worse. Victory would have to be decided by a one hit kill.

That doesn't mean that I want to indiscriminately murder a classmate though. I only want to kill those who deserve my revenge. I will not overstep that line.

Tamaki understood my silence as denial and it was easy to see that she was depressed.

“It’s alright, Tamaki… At least, if Sajima isn’t in love with Samejima I’ll stay my hand against her…” (Daichi)

“Eh? Daichi-sama, what did you say?” (Shuri)

Shuri who remembered my doubt asked me to repeat my words once more.

“If Sajima isn’t in love with Samejima I’ll stay my hand against her.” (Daichi)

“That’s it. Nanami doesn’t feel anything in particular towards that man.” (Tamaki)

“… … Yes?” (Daichi)

Learning this fact surprised me.

“Sajima isn’t in love with Samejima?” (Daichi)

“Yes. Though she’s often misunderstood because of her attitude… she has goodwill towards everyone.” (Tamaki)

“Huh? What about me?” (Daichi)

“… … Are we not good enough?” (Tamaki)

She evaded the question with a pleasant smile and a *Niko* sound at the end of her sentence.

“Ah, I’m sure. Nanami told me herself. 『I don’t feel anything in particular towards Samejima-kun.』” (Tamaki)

“… … Seriously?” (Daichi)

“Seriously. Here’s the story, Nanami told me that there was someone she liked from before.” (Tamaki) [TN: Before the transfer probably.]

“Ah, I also heard that. But, it seems like she couldn’t meet him.” (Shuri)

“Why?” (Daichi)

“That child, it seems he moved to some distant location… Ah, however, recently, she found a way to meet with him at last.” (Shuri)

“Yes yes. So in conclusion, Nanami is not in love with Samejima.” (Tamaki)

I didn’t know… that there was such a situation…

Because the two people who are her best friends agree unanimously, it must be a fact.

Then, it must be that she is with Samejima by chance.

If that's the case, she would come. It is possible to do so by taking advantage of her gentleness.

Therefore, what do I need to do…?

"… Hero-sama, you are shining brightly…" (Leadred)

"He's definitely thinking about something bad." (Tamaki)

"That's Daichi-sama for you." (Shuri)

◇◆◇◆◇◆◇◆◇◆◇◆

The next day. We went out at the same time as we did yesterday to collect supplies so that we wouldn't run into Samejima. We had just left the guild.

"Thank you for your purchase. Well then, today, I will inquire about that person's accommodations." (Miare)

I told you earlier, but it's not like I have requested some night play at a shady establishment.

The one who expressly came to the entrance for me with this standard business phrase with an extra is Miare-san, the guild's receptionist lady from yesterday.

When we went to the guild, she sold me information related to Samejima's group to us.

No, originally we asked for something different, but I requested her to『Sell me the information』.

Though it would take a while to explain the details… it seems Miare-san doesn't think of Samejima as a good hero.

The reason was, yesterday when we went to the guild, Miare-san was the only woman there. Furthermore, I uneventfully talked to her about meeting with the adventurers while concealing that I was a hero.

In fact that reason alone was enough for me to visit her once more, I thought.

I thought that I would have to request it, but since she jumped at me with a crying face the moment I stepped into the guild, it became like this. It made it easy for me and saved me the trouble.

I mean, I would have tried to surmise if it was possible that she was aware of Samejima's true character, even if just 1% of it, but since it came to that, well, life is beyond our control.

Compensation for her request was data on the demons inside【Scorching Execution Ground】. The Adventurer's Guild always has the latest data. Data is updated every January, and Miare-san is in charge of it this month.

Adventurers were attracted by the job description and were paid 5000 col for the easy to acquire information.

Normally, that was OK. Because no new floors were visited.

However, this month was an exception.

Because the heroes visited.

Samejima plunged into one new floor after another, increasing the amount of information she had to collect.

She had also asked the other adventurers, but the unknown floor number was unreasonable. So it was my turn.

She thought that I would also be trying to capture the【Scorching Execution Ground】as an adventurer. That's natural for people that go to the Adventurer's Guild to think.

Since there should be no one who goes there while a low level just to die.

Back to the story at hand.

When I asked her "Will you give me any information related to Samejima?" because she had nothing to lose, she accepted.

The reason was that I could add as much as I liked in postscript. "I want to see him soon" and "Because I'd like to know more about him", I said things like that. Though it wasn't necessary for her to delve deeply into the circumstances of her customers, from the questions it sounded like I was Samejima's girlfriend.

She never thought that I would be gathering information to kill the hero. More or less, that guy was introduced as the hope for humanity.

For me, getting data on demons is a cinch.

I promised absolute secrecy and everything worked out fine. As for the change of location, I'd be troubled if someone saw and became suspicious.

"Well… then. What do we do now?" (Tamaki)

Tamaki and I left the guild with some spare time left. We used the same combination today that we did yesterday, so that we won't be suspected in case we encountered Samejima, so that my identity won't be exposed.

If Shuri came across him, Samejima would not know.

The date is postponed. Staying alive is more important.

"Is there something we need to do? Since we bought weapons and other things yesterday, there is no need to today right?" (Daichi)

As Tamaki said, we have nearly an hour to do something. Miare-san told us the room number so we don't have to go to her for it.

"Then, do we return to the inn?" (Tamaki)

I looked at Tamaki after she said so, it was clear that the tension had lowered.

"… Let's go around town until it's time." (Daichi)

"Y-yeah… Let's go around?" (Tamaki)

Tamaki came entwined her arm with mine and, without change, began to cuddle close to me as we set out.

The envious and jealous stares from those around us were amazing. Looking around this place, I reaffirmed that Tamaki was beautiful.

"Where do you want to go?" (Daichi)

"Let me see… the opposite side we went to yesterday. Honestly I heard this from Shuri-chan, but there are some cute clothes shops there." (Tamaki)

"Then, you want me to buy you clothes at the store…?" (Daichi)

"No, I'll pay the money. I have the support money from the Royal Palace left over, so I wouldn't waste what's left of Katsuragi's you know? Since we rely on the dungeon for our livelihood." (Tamaki)

Tamaki beat her chest with a *Don*.

That makes me grateful. Though I want to spoil her…

"No, I'll pay." (Daichi)

"Eh, but-" (Tamaki)

"It's fine. If it's about money, entering this dungeon will bring in quite a lot of revenue." (Daichi)

"Did you hear me? Relying on dungeons for our livelihood is dangerous." (Tamaki)

"More than anything, I'd like to buy something for you Tamaki. It's okay to laugh at the worthless pride of a man." (Daichi)

"… For there to be another surprise attack from Katsuragi…" (Tamaki)

Tamaki averted her eyes from me. I wonder if I did something wrong?

"I see, I understand. But! I also want to buy a present for Katsuragi!" (Tamaki)

“Then, that would make mine have no point…” (Daichi)

“It’s my money to use freely so no complaining!” (Tamaki)

Tamaki became serious. She wouldn’t be stopped. Though I haven’t been with her long, I’ve come to understand this.

“Alright, alright. Feel free to.” (Daichi)

“That way of speaking is irritating… Well, anyway… you were seriously anxious earlier.” (Tamaki)

“What?” (Daichi)

“I haven’t heard, what do you plan to do after your revenge on Samejima?” (Tamaki)

The abrupt question from her was concerned with the future.

Yesterday, I told those kind of things to Tamaki. I will not give up this person and Shuri who are working hard. It’s fine to think that Leadred can live as she wants.

Perhaps, Tamaki is also worried… no, in her case she is just planning ahead… right?

At any rate, doubting Tamaki and the other two is no good.

“Naturally, I’ve already decided but… speaking here is bad. We’ll talk at the inn.” (Daichi)

“… It’s bad for others to hear?” (Tamaki)

“Yeah. Mostly.” (Daichi)

“It can’t be helped then, can it? Well then, let’s do this in a hurry! We don’t have long until the promised time.” (Tamaki)

“Yeah, please show the way.” (Daichi)

“Because I already know where we’re going, leave it to me!” (Tamaki)

If it were the me from a while ago, it would have been unthinkable to waste the time until meeting with Miare-san with Tamaki after that sort of conversation.

Story 3-4 『Reunion』

“Hm hm hmm” (Tamaki)

Tamaki was humming in a good mood nearby. She had changed from her adventurer clothes into some attire more suited to a young woman.

She put on a thin pink shirt covered by a light blue sweatshirt and some jean shorts.

According to her they were easy to move in. That was the reason Tamaki gave.

“Ah, Yuji-san.” (Miare)

After finishing her work, Miare-san, who was wearing her business suit, called out my alias as I neared the entrance.

“I’m sorry, did you have to wait long?” (Daichi)

“No, I just now arrived.” (Miare)

“That’s good. Please come in, it is troublesome to talk standing around.” (Daichi)

I urged her to enter. She followed into the inn after us.

“… That’s…” (Miare)

Miare-san’s line of sight was on mine and Tamaki’s hands—our ring fingers in particular—and alternated between them.

… I know what you want to say. Tamaki’s strategy was working well, and I had to suppress a laugh.

“Is there something wrong?” (Daichi)

“N-no… Ah, that reminds me, to what extent do you want information about the hero Samejima? More or less, as far as I know I am aware of all of what has been gathered.” (Miare)

“I don’t mind. Is just half of the 5000 col fee fine?” (Daichi)

“Eh-. No, this money is Yuji-san’s reward…” (Miare)

“Then, I’ve received the full amount, and I give this lady half.” (Daichi)

“But… is that really ok?” (Miare)

“Yeah. Because I’ve received the reward. Please enjoy yourself a little with the money. You must be worn out from this month.” (Daichi)

It’s not that I proposed this to her because I sympathized with her being abused by Samejima.

It’s called hush money.

I don’t think that she would tell anyone, but this is just in case. After all, it was a verbal promise to give her half.

Only the fact that she received money remained. If people knew about it, her position in the guild would fall. At worst, Miare-san could be kicked from the guild.

Something like that was sure to be noticed by her. It was within her intelligence to understand.

“Thank you for your concern.” (Miare)

“We appreciate your continued support. Now, please. Sit.” (Daichi)

While conversing, we came to the room and I opened the door. Inside, Shuri had prepared drinks. Leadred was in another room on standby.

“Then, excuse me.” (Miare)

“Yes. Shall we begin?” (Daichi)

After Miare-san entered the room, I closed the door and began the confidential exchange.

◇◆◇◆◇◆◇◆◇◆◇◆

In conclusion, the information Miare-san brought was more than expected.

The range and times of Samejima’s actions. What kind of items he bought. The inn he was using. The kinds of magic he was confirmed to use. The predicted path he would take to the dungeon. The roster and dates of female adventurers he took that were not heroes.

She laid out all of the information she had.

“How was it? Was it to your satisfaction?” (Miare)

“Yeah, very much so. How do you have that information?” (Daichi)

When I asked for her true intention, Miare-san’s facial expression took on a distant look.

“I’m the only person in the guild who isn’t captivated by Samejima right? Though, that guy is very persistent, Mainly in bragging and making passes though.” (Miare)

“Ha ha ha…” (Daichi)

I could only laugh dryly. For her, an inhabitant of this world, to denounce him as a hero…

“A braggart like him is no good… if I had to say, I prefer men like Yuji-san… no.” (Miare)

Miare-san ran her hand from my check to my neck, then drifted to my arm, before eventually resting it on my hand.

An obvious invitation. Unlike her appearance before, she had the obscene atmosphere of a prostitute.

“I wonder if I should call you ‘hero of demons’-san?” (Miare)

Those words were enough to give me a shock.

“——!?” (Daichi)

As a conditioned reflex, I took and my sword and brandished it in my hand. I put the shining blade to Miare’s neck.

Nevertheless, she continues with her bewitching smile. She was composed.

“… You, who are you?” (Daichi)

“Oh? You didn’t hear from Messiah-chan?” (Miare)

“… That goddess again…?” (Daichi)

I’m fed up with hearing that familiar name.

I understand that Miare must have a close relationship with her to call her Messiah-chan.

We may have met a troublesome person…

“… Good grief.” (Daichi)

“Really? I would have thought she would tell you… Then, I’ll introduce myself again.” (Miare)

Saying so, she leaned forward in order to emphasize her breasts.

“I am Miare Pharma. One of the six generals, and a succubus. ‘Hero of demons’-san, I will be cooperating with you. For the sake of reviving demons.

I called in Leadred who was waiting in the next room to find out if Miare was the real deal.

With her attitude changed, we resumed the discussion.

“You know… if you were an ally from the start why didn’t you tell us? It wasn’t necessary for us to bother going through the proper procedures…” (Daichi)

“Because, if I said something like that out of nowhere, wouldn’t it be suspicious? However, I thought that since I skillfully conveyed something so easy for you to understand, you would have realized.” (Miare)

“Uu-“ (Daichi)

She hit where it hurt.

As Miare said, if I calmed down to think about it everything happened ideally. Though, even so, I felt uneasy that her scheme was carried out easily.

Yesterday, didn’t Tamaki heal what was weighing on my mind, damnit…

I was angry at myself differently than usual.

“… What’s wrong? You have on a scary face.” (Miare)

Miare poked my cheek with a *TsunTsun*.

“… Cut it out. Continuing from before, what was that about six generals?” (Daichi)

“You really don’t know huh, Hero-san. Why did Akina-chan also not tell you? Haven’t you two been together for a while…” (Miare)

Miare was preaching to Leadred who was sitting on the bed like she was being punished.

“… Sorry. I left that out because I wasn’t interested in the Six Demon Generals. It was fine as long as I could fight someone strong…” (Leadred)

Miare sighed at Leadred’s reply. She seemed more like the image of a worldly man than a succubus.

“It hasn’t changed, your weakness for fighting… It’s fine, I’ll teach you. Because of that, Hero-san, call me Miare-sensei.” (Miare)

Miare wrapped around the hand I had on top of the table.

“Refused.” (Daichi)

“So heartless… people like that aren’t popular you know?” (Miare)

“The spots on both of my sides are taken.” (Daichi)

“… Hmph.” (Miare)

Miare alternated her gaze between Shuri and Tamaki, the two I just mentioned. She seemed to be evaluating them.

“One looks good… though the other one is no good…” (Miare)

The words she murmured disappeared before reaching our ears.

Her serious expression changed completely, and turned into a dubious smile.

“So you know about the Six Demon Generals?” (Miare)

“That’s right. Well, I understand half of it.” (Daichi)

Akina Leadred and Fantra Angas came to mind. These guys were strong and sealed at the bottoms of dungeons.

“I think’s it’s good that Hero-san has thought about it. Messiah-chan nominated the strongest of each of the clans to serve as one of the Six Demon Generals.” (Miare)

She held up five fingers in total, and folded one each time she said someone’s name.

“Akina Leadred of the Oni tribe, Fantra Angas of the Undead tribe, Miare Pharma of the Succubus tribe, Lily Shuraham of the Beastman tribe, and Garfunkel Arthnight of the Dragonman tribe.” (Miare)

“Isn’t there supposed to be six people?” (Daichi)

“In truth there is the also the demi-human tribe but… the hero Terias wiped them out.” (Miare)

“Their entire race?” (Daichi)

That scale was impossible to laugh at. The thought that there was someone like that, it made me shiver. Crazy.

“That’s right, Terias held a monstrous strength… I lost my body fighting him. But, thanks to Messiah-chan I was somehow able to survive. Everyone else was sealed, though.” (Miare)

She looked up at the ceiling, as though yearning for something. She was smiling sadly.

She’s probably remembering those days.

“So, I’ve been hiding my form with magic and living quietly… But, recently, I received some interesting news.” (Miare)

“… That was…” (Daichi)

“Yeah. The hero summoning. Since that day I’ve been scrounging up as much information about that nasty guy for you?” (Miare)

“… Ah, thank you. You’ve really helped me.” (Daichi)

Miare said it like a light joke, though it was easy to see that she must have risked her life to gather it.

A demon repeatedly being in contact with a hero was equal to suicide. Her magic may have been caught one day. Then herself killed.

Under those circumstances she gathered this much information. It’s only natural to thank her.

“You are welcome… Well, guess I’ll go home.” (Miare)

Miare rose from her seat and shouldered her bag as she tried to leave the room.

“What? You can stay longer you know? Don’t you have things to talk about with Leadred?” (Daichi)

“In truth I was also thinking that I’d stay until later tonight to receive Hero-san’s thick liquid… though with that child here I’ll pass. As expected, it’s impossible.” (Miare)
[TN: Last sentence has the implication that she wants to even though it is impossible]

Miare looked at Shuri—no, Tamaki and said that.

“Eh, me?” (Tamaki)

“You guys, I think you make a good match. Enjoy yourselves tonight… good luck.” (Miare)

Miare winked and left the room after purposefully adding that last part.

That woman, dropping a bomb like that at the last moment…!

When I looked back, Tamaki’s face was a bright red, Shuri’s face had solidified into a smile, and Leadred was worrying.

… How will I solve this misunderstanding!?

Half out of desperation, the condition to survive was to sleep together tonight, about three hours or so.

◇◆◇◆◇◆◇◆◇◆◇◆◇◆

It was early in the morning before the sun had risen.

With the information from Miare, after sleeping shortly with Shuri, we were ready to depart for the dungeon.

Indeed, Shuri was prudent in the last dungeon capture. She was dissatisfied with the method.

“With this are we ready?” (Daichi)

Potions and elixirs were in the pouch. The Yanu leafs were put in. I put the dagger and long sword in their scabbard on my back.

“I am also ready.” (Shuri)

Shuri also seemed to have finished. This time is different from usual, she is wearing a uniform for adventurers. She seems to have bought it yesterday.

She didn't wear a protector over her top because of the ordinary woman's size, though she did wear metal gauntlets. Shuri also put her dagger over her shorts she wore on her healthy thighs.

She gave the rough impression of a thief from a game.

"Alright, then, let's go." (Daichi)

When I opened the door, Tamaki's group had already finished their preparations and were leaning against the wall.

"Ah, you finally came out. You're late." (Tamaki)

"Did you have fun?" (Leadred)

"Leadred-san!" (Shuri)

"You three need to quiet down, it's still early. It's not the time to enjoy yourselves." (Daichi)

We leave the inn having that conversation. According to Miare's information, Samejima should still be sleeping at the inn right now.

That guy goes to the dungeon every day, from noon to eight at night. It looks like they have capture three floors each time.

The【Scorching Execution Ground】was not that far from Russell as can be seen from it being visited as a day trip. It's about a thirty minute walk from here.

We were walking on the road to the dungeon.

"… Come to think of it." (Tamaki)

Tamaki casually said as she lined up next to me.

By the way, Shuri was pouting and wouldn't come near me, as is with Leadred behind me.

"Katsuragi's plans for the future. Will you not tell me?" (Tamaki)

"… … We'll talk in the dungeon." (Daichi)

"Wait, at that time. You forgot." (Tamaki)

"… I'm ashamed. When Miare talked to us it flew away." (Daichi)

"Geez, will you get a grip? … Well, we shouldn't mind relying on each other. She said we s-suited each other…" (Tamaki)

"Depending on you is really embarrassing. We even bought something like rings." (Daichi)

I looked at the ring that I had put on my right hand. A similar one was on Tamaki's left ring finger.

Tamaki set the location at her convenience. There was no ulterior motive… though, I'll wear it to the bitter end.

"… Oh well. I'm also embarrassed from relying on you." (Tamaki)

"Rather, that is better." (Daichi)

According to Miare's story, the last two demons are sealed in dungeons. One from the Beastman tribe and the other from the Dragonman tribe.

… Why do both bring nothing but a warlike image to mind?

I shook my head from left to right to rid myself of the unpleasant images.

"What's wrong suddenly?" (Tamaki)

"… No, it's nothing. Rather, look. I can see it." (Daichi)

I pointed forward to the entrance of the dungeon that rose ahead of us. Then, a girl of around the same age as us slowly walked into our view.

With black hair that extended to her waist and adventurer's clothes that looked like ours. With red eyes different from Leadred's. She had a quiet atmosphere that was emphasized by her stereotypical Japanese feminine virtues.

However, where was this déjà vu feeling coming from?

"… … -san." (—)

I saw her mouth move. She was crying.

Crying and smiling.

It looked as if she was meeting a lover she was separated from for many years.

She started walking faster, and was eventually running—and leaped into my chest.

"I wanted to meet you, Yuji-san!!" (—)

Story 3-5 『Hayase Fuuko's Feelings』

I was confused. Let's slowly organize what happened.

We headed to the【Scorching Execution Ground】while it was still time for everyone to be asleep.

I was talking with Tamaki.

I don't know this girl that clung to me.

OK?

Not OK.

This development was so erratic that I unintentionally tsukkomi'd myself.

"Ah… Yuji-san's smell after such a long time…" (—)

She put her head against my chest and began smelling me like a hamster. I could almost hear her make the *KunkaKunka* to imitate one. [TN: … Hamsters really do that?]

… No, I'm not observing the situation. What is with this dangerous child?

Let's think about this calmly.

Instead of recognizing me as Katsuragi Daichi, she saw me as Yuji. The ones involved with me that knew me as Yuji were Umahara, Minamoto, Tamaki and Hayase.

Moreover, with the condition of so much good feelings that she would hug me and even sniff my smell, it was narrowed down.

There was only one person it could be. I didn't say where I'd be, but I asked this book girl to do me a favor.

"… Are you Hayase Fuuko?" (Daichi)

I asked for confirmation. Then, the girl's movements stopped, and she looked up.

"You remembered, Yuji-san!" (Hayase)

She had a brilliant smile like the sun that I'd never seen.

"Of course. From your appearance you seem to have done well." (Daichi)

"Yes. It was painful but… I held on by remembering Yuji-san's words." (Hayase)

"I see, I see. But, why are you here? The Royal Palace is probably safer." (Daichi)

“Someone informed me that Yuji-san was looking for a companion. Besides, that person gave me the power to be able to travel safely…” (Hayase)

“Power?” (Daichi)

“That’s right. Please look. Open!” (Hayase)

Hayase showed her status to me.

＝＝＝＝＝＝＝＝＝＝＝＝＝＝＝＝＝

Hayase Fuuko Job: Hero Level: 17

Stamina: 800

Magic: 1720

Physical: 520

Endurance: 340

Agility: 300

Special Abilities:

『World Retrieval』: After examining a term from anywhere in the world, it is possible to obtain information related to it. However, the medium is limited to paper.

『Crimson Eyes of Destruction』: Anything caught in the field of vision while consuming magic is destroyed. The magic consumption is 400 per use.

Special Status:

『Demonic Eyes』: Ability in things related to kinetic vision, etcetera, rises.

＝＝＝＝＝＝＝＝＝＝＝＝＝＝＝＝＝

Seeing her status had my eyes wide open. Hayase’s special ability is not what it used to be, she obtained a new one. [TN: Took some liberties with wording here…]

So, we had the same special ability.

“Hayase! What kind of person gave you this power?” (Daichi)

“I’m sorry… I never saw her figure… Ah, but, it was a woman’s voice.” (Hayase)

I was convinced. It was Messiah. That person gave Hayase this power.

I didn’t think that she would involve Hayase.

… What the heck is that person plotting?

“Yuji-san. What is wrong?” (Hayase)

“Ah, no, it’s nothing. It’s my fault, you surprised me.” (Daichi)

“N-no. I… that’s, I believe in Yuji-san. I don’t mind if you are a little rough. I will follow you anywhere.” (Hayase)

Hayase firmly grasped my hand and brought it towards her chest. Without change she gave me a hot gaze.

… Was Hayase always so assertive? I’m beginning to question my memory of her being docile just a few days ago.

I turned towards Hayase feeling these one-way sensations from her, and Tamaki brushed off my hand that was fastened to Hayase with a serious face.

“… You, are you really Hayase-san?” (Tamaki)

Tamaki was sending her stares of doubt, still not believing her. On the other hand, Hayase returned it with a smile.

“Yes. It’s been a while, Tamaki Yuina-san. Since the【Labyrinth of the Dreamless Sleep】.” (Hayase)

“! … Like the real thing.” (Tamaki)

Tamaki recognized her name, and had no room to doubt because she even said the dungeon that we entered, she seemed to recognize her as Hayase Fuuko.

The unpleasant air seemed to settle down.

However, Hayase began to approach again. The atmosphere felt like it was freezing.

“… By the way, Tamaki-san…” (Hayase)

“What?” (Tamaki)

“It seems to me that ring is the same as Yuji-san’s but… that’s impossible?” (Hayase)

Her voice was cold. The glow in her eyes was gone. I understood instantly that her smile was being forced.

“Eh, t-that’s right…” (Tamaki)

Tamaki was overpowered. Is it an illusion that I see a female demon behind Hayase?

Surprised by a pressure that Tamaki also wasn’t accustomed to and, moreover, unimaginable from the Hayase until now, she suddenly ended up revealing the secret.

“Hayase-san! This man is not your loved Yuji-san, he is Katsuragi, Katsuragi Daichi!!” (Tamaki)

… You’ve already exposed me, Tamaki-san?

“Katsuragi…kun? The one from our class…?” (Hayase)

“Yes! That Katsuragi!” (Tamaki)

“Please stop joking, Tamaki-san. He died because of us. You would insult someone that is dead?” (Hayase)

Her crimson eyes narrowed as Hayase criticized Tamaki. This has become troublesome.

“Aaaah-, that’s not it!” Katsuragi did die, but he revived… it’s complicated, Katsuragi! How did you revive!?” (Tamaki)

“…That’s unreasonable, oi.” (Daichi)

“Oh, come on! Shuri-chan! Take over!” (Tamaki)

Tamaki gave up on explaining it to Hayase, and entrusted the circumstances to Shuri.

“Yeah, I got it, Yui-chan. Leave it to me.” (Shuri)

Shuri that received the baton from Tamaki went in front of Hayase and began to explain.

“Hayase-san, it’s been a long time. I’m Hamakaze Shuri, however… do you know me?” (Shuri)

“I know Hamakaze-san. However, she also suffered the same tragedy as Katsuragi-kun. In the unlikely event that she lived, she wouldn’t be here. Who are you?” (Hayase)

“I am Hamakaze Shuri. Look at this… it should prove it.” (Shuri)

Shuri opened her status and showed it to Hayase.

Hayase’s complexion lost color after seeing it.

“That’s… …” (Hayase)

“Do you understand? I am truly Hamakaze Shuri. Daichi-sama—that is, Katsuragi Daichi-kun used his power to revive me. And, Katsuragi-kun revived the same way.” (Shuri)

Shuri conveyed the facts calmly.

“In other words, the Yuji-san that you spoke of is Katsuragi-kun. Yui-chan and I have already accepted that.” (Shuri)

“… What are you trying to say?” (Hayase)

“I want to ask this. Has Hayase-san come to like Yuji-san?” (Shuri)

“Yes. I want to spend my life with Yuji-san.” (Hayase)

Without faltering, Hayase answered. However, Shuri didn’t stop there.

Was that because of Shuri’s feelings, or was she thinking about Hayase?

“In that case, Hayase-san should return to the Royal Palace.” (Shuri)

I thought it was the former.

“For what reason?” (Hayase)

“Because the gentle Yuji-san that you know of doesn’t exist. Because this is definitely Katsuragi-kun.” (Shuri)

“… … …” (Hayase)

Hayase was silent, staring at Shuri. I don’t know how long the silence lasted before Shuri started again.

“So, Hayase-san should return to the Royal Pala-“ (Shuri)

“It doesn’t matter.” (Hayase)

“—Why do you say that?” (Shuri)

Shuri was surprised by the reply as she didn’t expected, but cheated by adding on another question.

“For example, even if Yuji-san is Katsuragi-kun, at that time he gave me courage, and that truly encouraged me. Only his name changed from『Yuji』to 『Katsuragi Daichi』. Then, I love Katsuragi-kun. I will spend my life with this person, even if it is painful.” (Hayase)

Hayase leaned on him. Her face was filled with happiness.

“So, I want to be useful for Katsuragi-kun. Katsuragi-kun… will you grant my wish?” (Hayase)

She asked while unintentionally smiling.

Watching what happened, I think that I failed and was no match for Hayase.

A strong power, and a trusting personality. There was no reason to refuse her.

If I made her my companion, she would be a perfect resource.

I decided on my answer.

“Yeah. I’ll be relying on you, Hayase.” (Daichi)

“Yes! Please leave it to me!” (Hayase)

For the dungeon capture, I gained a reliable party member.

“… By the way, Tamaki-san. You changed the subject, but I want the true meaning of that ring. You still… haven’t told me.” (Hayase)

“I also want to know, Yui-chan.” (Shuri)

“Eh-“ (Tamaki)

Tamaki was caught by the two girls’ painful stares, and I ignored it.

Story 3-6『Another Person』

【Scorching Execution Ground】. This dungeon's feature is that the temperature rises every floor you descend. For example, Floor 1 is 0°C, Floor 2 is 1°C, Floor 3 is 2°C.

In other words, people that can make use of Fire and Ice magic are essential in capturing this dungeon.

We began searching Floor 10 at four o'clock in the morning in an area of intense cold. Our bodies began to loosen a little, and began to reach the point where we could move decently.

"Here, Leadred, drink this potion." (Daichi)

"I'll gladly accept it." (Leadred)

When I took the test-tube like bottle that contained a potion from my pouch and passed it, Leadred that had fallen behind removed the cap and drank it.

So far, we've had her using her magic without participating in battles. Otherwise, we would have all froze to death.

Leadred's softened our wrists and ankles in preparation for fights.

Hayase looked around the surroundings and reported enemies to us.

"… There are three Soriarnos and two Lingtons approaching from the front. Contact in fifteen seconds" (Hayase) [TN: Suggestions on what these monsters should be called in English?]

Hayase, whose eyesight had become better than ours as a side effect of Demonic Eyes, was able to quickly relay information to us from looking.

In a dungeon like this with little light it was a precious power.

"Got it. Leadred, it's unfortunate but do it now. Tamaki move to the rear guard to escort Hayase." (Daichi)

"OK. Leave it to me." (Tamaki)

"I was waiting for this." (Leadred)

Leadred drew her sword and began licking her lips as she began the preemptive strike.

"Guoooon!!" (Soriarno)

"Hiyauuuu!!" (Ringuton)

As Hayase said, what came into view were Soriarno of a size five times that of a flying bat and Lington that would curl their body and crush adventurers' bones with their hard carapace.

“I got it!” (Leadred)

Leadred’s sword cut the Soriarno’s body in two in the air.

“Leave the ones in the air to me. Hero-sama and Shuri get the Lingtons!” (Leadred)

Leadred gleefully swung her sword. Looking at the situation, we decided to concentrate on the Lingtons first.

“Shuri get the right side. Don’t let them get behind us.” (Daichi)

“I understand!” (Shuri)

After I issued the instruction, without stopping I ran to the front of the Lington and assaulted it.

“Wind.” (Daichi)

The wind made the Lington stop moving forward. A small gap formed between that guy’s body and the ground. I kicked it up like a soccer ball.

Without killing its momentum, the Lington crashed into the ceiling. The body that was rolled into a ball opened from the impact.

“Hmph-!” (Daichi)

I pierced its abdomen with my sword before it could roll its body back into a ball. It was weak to attacks from the inner part.

“Hiu!?” (Ringuton)

A short scream from a Lington was heard from nearby. There was a corpse split by Shuri’s daggers under her feet.

“Done here as well.” (Shuri)

Understanding with a glance, Leadred who had been enjoying the fight also came back.

“… No matter how many times I see it… you are all so strong.” (Hayase)

Hayase, who had been the spectator let out her thoughts.

“For the sake of revenge, I have to be stronger than Samejima.” (Daichi)

“… Revenge… is it?” (Hayase)

Hayase tilted her head.

Which reminds me, I never told her.

“Ah, right. I am gathering companions in order to kill Samejima. Of course, both Shuri and Tamaki stand with me knowing that… are you disillusioned?” (Daichi)

“No, because Samejima-kun deserves it. I don’t mind.” (Hayase)

“I thought that Hayase would say that.” (Daichi)

And so, I was able to inform her while also gaining peace of mind.

Hayase won’t defy me, because I gave her conviction.

“All right, we’ve cooperated so far, so let’s continue as we have and find the stairs room!” (Daichi)

We stepped foot inside.

Shortly after, we arrived at the stairs room.

Like the High Wolf on the 10th Floor’s stair room of【Rigal’s Den】, there was a Giant Wolf whose body was large to make up for the temperature difference in the stair room of 【Scorching Execution Ground】.

“The Giant Wolf has high resistance to fire magic! Contrary to its large body, it has high agility so be careful!” (Hayase)

“Good luck, you three!” (Tamaki)

We were supported by the easy explanation from Hayase and Tamaki behind us, and confronted the giant.

Trying to waste this guy’s stamina here would be wasteful.

The reason being that had experimented on the same principal that Tamaki put to use in the 【Labyrinth of the Sleeping Trance】.

That was whether my shield could be manipulated like that as well.

“Leadred, Shuri, can you hold him in one place? There is something that I want to try.” (Daichi)

“Understood.” (Leadred)

“Roger.” (Shuri)

Acknowledging it with a single word each, Leadred leapt into the sky and slashed. Shuri made use of her small body and attacked the Giant Wolf’s legs, giving it small wounds.

When the Giant Wolf tried to trample Shuri, Leadred used the timing to get its attention.

I think she was playing with the dog as though it were a pet.

In the meantime, I solidified the image. Because it was the first time using it, I was worried that I wouldn't do it right.

However, it couldn't be helped. I began to prepare.

"Spirits of the earth, create a shield and protect me. Multi-Guard." (Daichi) [TN: Kanji for 'Multiple Earth Shields']

The developing solid earth shields entered the left and right of the Giant Wolf's vision and it took notice. Furthermore, I repeated the chant five times to build the walls up.

Looking at the wolf like a test subject, it was breathing unsteadily. Well, even though it noticed it won't be able to escape.

Now's the chance!

"You two, get away from there!" (Daichi)

Complying with my words, Shuri and Leadred stepped away a large distance.

The hands that I had opened before, I clenched as tightly as I could.

"Earth Vice!" (Daichi)

The shields rapidly moved together in conjunction towards the Giant Wolf. Because Shuri had continued to torment its legs, it couldn't move.

"Guoru!?" (Giant Wolf)

At last, the giant was sandwiched. At that moment, red blood splatted nearby. The heavy shield didn't stop, and we could hear its bones being crushed into little pieces like a demon eating its prey from far away.

Before long, its movements stopped. At that point there were no longer any vestiges of its large build, and looked like a common corpse that was cruelly killed.

"Experiment… success!" (Daichi)

◇◆◇◆◇◆◇◆◇◆◇◆

The boss on the 10th Floor was defeated in about ten minutes, and we were crushing the 13th Floor. We were in a room on that floor. It was a Monster House, though when we opened the door we left it like that, so that the monsters wouldn't reappear.

After us three one-sidedly trampling the floor, we returned to Tamaki and Hayase having a leisurely talk.

“According to one theory, due to Terias’ appearance Messiah was pressured into ordering her excellent subordinates confined in buildings in her possession, waiting for the chance of a counterattack.” (Hayase)

We used Hayase’s『World Retrieval』to discuss the history of this world from before we came here.

Still, obtaining information like this is a life saver. Because she can accurately tell us what to be careful of and the weak points of demons, our progress advancing has been fast.

“Ah, everyone, thank you for your effort.” (Hayase)

“Thank you for your effort” (Tamaki)

The girls gave us words of appreciation. Tamaki was the same as usual, but Hayase was somewhat apologetic.

“Um…” (Hayase)

“What is it?” (Daichi)

“Is there really nothing that I could do? Katsuragi-kun’s group are the only ones having to work…” (Hayase)

“What, it was something like that? Don’t worry about it. It’s not time for Hayase to act yet.” (Daichi)

Right, we can’t afford to use her power on this layer and need to preserve it for later.

『Crimson Eyes of Destruction』consumes magic in large quantities, but it’s just that powerful of an ability.

It’s necessary to save it until the second half. Because Tamaki’s specialty is ice magic, the same goes for her.

We don’t mind that it’s us three for now.

“I-I understand. Until then, do your best to keep going.” (Hayase)

“Since in case something happens, there’s both Leadred and I, you should’t strain yourself. If we were to put so much strength in a place like this, we’ll be exhausted at the end.” (Daichi)

“I-is that so? I’m inexperienced so… I’m sorry.” (Hayase)

“You don’t have to apologize. I expect great things from you.” (Daichi)

“Yes!” (Hayase)

And, Leadred tapped on my shoulder with a *TonTon*.

“Hero-sama. How far are we going today?” (Leadred)

“Samejima has been progressing at three floors per day so I’d think the 34th Floor at least.” (Daichi)

He had already captured the 30th Floor. His data-like schedule for today is the 33rd Floor. [TN: I must have messed up which floor he was on in a previous chapter. I think I put the 3rd Floor there.]

So as to not encounter him, we rushed to an unexplored floor before they arrived, and meet with the dungeon Guardian before Samejima.

For that reason we continued to go down without returning to the surface. However, when it was time to sleep we went up a floor. That was absolute.

Rest is important for the body. Inside where the temperature is high, continuing without proper rest is hazardous.

“Tamaki, what’s the time?” (Daichi)

“6:30.” (Tamaki)

Thirteen floors in less than two hours. By the time they arrive at the dungeon’s entrance we should be somewhere around the 30th Floor.

Our speed was ideal.

“Alright, let’s use this place to rest for a little. Also, confirm your statuses.” (Daichi)

“Al~right.” (Tamaki)

“It’s finally possible to sit down…” (Shuri)

“Certainly.” (Hayase)

“Understood.” (Leadred)

Each gave their response in turn, and everyone opened their status windows—as I thought that, Tamaki let out a big voice.

“What’s wrong?” (Daichi)

I immediately rushed over to where Tamaki was.

“Ah, sorry. I was kind of surprised… um, take a look at this…” (Tamaki)

Tamaki pointed at the text below the Special Ability status.

＝＝＝＝＝＝＝＝＝＝＝＝＝＝＝＝

Tamaki Yuina Job: High Grade Slave Level: 52

Stamina: 1210

Magic: 3480

Physical: 1430

Endurance: 1240

Agility: 1000

Special Abilities:

『Witch of Freezing』: The effect of the ice magic is increased by one class. However, God-class magic is not increased.

『Chant Omission』: When magic is invoked, the chant may be removed. However, the mana consumption is increased by 50%.

Unique Abilities:

『Chant Substitution』: Magic can be activated without invocation by a preset action. To set an action, 『Settings』→ Do the action →『Exit Settings』.

Special Status:

『High-Grade Slave』 Owner → Katsuragi Daichi. All attacks against him are sealed. Compulsory submission until release.

＝＝＝＝＝＝＝＝＝＝＝＝＝＝＝＝＝

A new two-word ability was added to Tamaki’s entry.

Story 3-7『Frivolous Person』

Unique Abilities.

Strong powers different from the Special Abilities that the goddess Claria gives.

So, I predict—the demon goddess Messiah gave this power.

Normally, these are powers that humans cannot gain.

"… What is this? It's almost identical to chant omission…" (Tamaki)

Tamaki who was given a power outside of the normal rules was beyond surprised, and gave that reaction.

I understand that feeling. However, at least until we kill Samejima, we have no coice but to get along with the fellow who'll be giving us those powers.

That is, in other words, to be given a Unique Ability.

"… You, Messiah likes you." (Daichi)

"The demonic goddess!?" (Tamaki)

"That's probably it… well, you look glad, Tamaki." (Daichi)

"… Y-yeah, well. It's because I can become stronger. Besides…" (Tamaki)

I understand that she's mumbling as she's moving her mouth, but her voice is so quiet that I can't catch it. However, only a thickheaded main character would let this pass.

I strained my ears to hear Tamaki's words. However, I was interrupted by Hayase coming between us.

"Tamaki-san? With this are we the same?" (Hayase)

"I-I can't say…" (Tamaki)

Tamaki glanced at me and looked away. Her cheeks were faintly red.

… Tamaki can be strangely innocent…

"Hayase. Aren't I the same too?" (Leadred)

Leadred lumped herself in with words of being unable to read the mood. Hayase and Tamaki looked at her with warm gazes, as if she was a child that knew nothing about love.

The person in question didn't seem to notice at all.

“? … Ah, come to think about it, what about Shuri? Does she have a Unique Ability?” (Leadred)

Because of Leadred just now, she thought up a simple question.

All three of them including me simultaneously looked away from Leadred to Shuri.

I knew. I understood. I didn’t mention it.

Because right now, that was a landmine.

“… Leadred-san? What did you say?” (Shuri)

Shuri tilted her head with a *GiGiGi* as though it were rusted with metal. Her eyes weren’t smiling.

“No, I was wondering if Shuri had a Unique Ability.” (Leadred)

“I don’t. Is it bad if I don’t? Yeah, I don’t have one. I’m different from everyone else. Right, Leadred-san?” (Shuri)

“—!!” (Leadred)

Leadred, finally noticing her mistake, put a hand over her mouth. However, she was too slow.

“I-it looks like that. But, it’s nothing to worry about.” (Leadred)

“Do you really think so?” (Shuri)

Scary. Seeing Shuri’s smile was very scary.

“O-of course I do.” (Leadred)

Liar. Her eyes were looking around. It’s obvious that you’re lying.

Shuri saw through her thoughts, grabbed the red oni by the collar, and took her outside of the room.

Help! I seemed to hear her scream something unusual, it must have been a hallucination. I decided to believe that.

“S-shall we continue talking?” (Tamaki)

Tamaki tried to break the silence that everyone was afraid of.

I also shook the terrifying image of the lovely scary woman from my mind for the sake of paying attention to Tamaki’s words.

“Like Shuri-chan said, does having a Unique Ability mean the god Messiah really likes you?” (Tamaki)

“In addition to that, perhaps, isn’t there another condition? I think that that was my case.” (Hayase)

“I think it’s also possible that you have to defeat one of the Six Demon Generals. Tamaki meets that condition.” (Daichi)

“I wonder if that’s it?” (Hayase)

“Hey, I think『Chant Substitution』is the power Fantra had. He was using magic constantly without chanting and was snapping his fingers.” (Tamaki)

Ah, Tamaki struck her palm with her fist with a *Pon*.

“… Saying that, it’s just a hunch.” (Tamaki)

“Perhaps, the system may have handed it over. Because Tamaki beat that guy… she inherited it. Well, something like that. Though, I’m happy you became stronger.” (Daichi)

“I see… But, I wonder why… When I thought that that guy was using it, I was suddenly displeased…” (Tamaki)

I smiled bitterly at Tamaki’s thoughts. I didn’t know what to say.

Fantra definitely had skill, but his attitude was awful. She didn’t want to have something in common with him.

“Well, isn’t it fine? I’ve said it already, but its strength is guaranteed.” (Daichi)

“… That’s right, yeah. Well, let’s try it out immediately!” (Tamaki) [TN: ‘yeah’ = ‘un’. <3]

Tamaki stood up and said the word to change the settings.

“『Settings』!” (Tamaki)

◇◆◇◆◇◆◇◆◇◆◇◆

“Tamaki… why it became like this… you understand?” (Daichi)

“… Yes.” (Tamaki)

The 20th Floor’s stair room.

The boss of this room is a half human from the dragon tribe called a Lizardman. He could breathe fire and stop swords from hitting hit scales with his agility.

There were ten waiting.

They didn’t seem to be affected by my sword so we started chanting magic, and Tamaki fired off magic from the rear.

I knew that Tamaki was itching to try out her『Chant Substitution』for not having to chant.

But, since she's not Leadred, I believed she could endure it.

Though my expectations were stunningly betrayed.

Tamaki annihilated the Lizardmen as a result.

The precious magic was used. The precious magic was used.

"Tamaki. Would you say the role you were given?" (Daichi)

"It is to lower the temperature in lower floors so that we can search comfortable." (Tamaki)

"Is that right? Then why is it bad to use your magic?" (Daichi)

"It should be preserved." (Tamaki)

"You know, don't you? Then, how much magic value do you have left?" (Daichi)

Tamaki opened her status, grinned and laughed as she said her magic value.

"1470 out of 3480." (Tamaki)

"I see, I see. Less than half huh. Hahahahaha." (Daichi)

"That's right. Ahahahaha." (Tamaki)

""Hahahaha"" (Daichi, Tamaki)

"—I decided you are a shield." (Daichi)

I immediately made the decision.

"W-wait, Katsuragi. It's okay! I've seriously reflected on using the magic!" (Tamaki)

"Using the elixir is rejected." (Daichi)

"Of course! I'll use… this!" (Tamaki)

Tamaki took out the Magic Crystal that Fantra loved to use in the【Labyrinth of the Sleeping Trance】from her waist pouch.

Since it was still shining, the stored magic hasn't been used up.

"You, when did you?" (Daichi)

“Leadred and I found it just after we started heading towards the transfer room. You know, that guy also seemed to be using the needed magic from this instead of his, so I figured why couldn’t we?” (Tamaki)

I see. I overlooked that.

Though I had forgotten about it at the time because I was so frantic, now that you mention it that’s right.

The reason Fantra could constantly use magic to that extent was this crystal stone.

“Well done, Tamaki!” (Daichi)

“Right? But, I don’t know how to use the magic inside of it. However, with Hayase-san here we can browse all of the books in the world so problem solved!” (Tamaki)

Tamaki posed.

“Then, Hayase-san. Could you take a look at it?” (Tamaki)

“Yes, leave it to me. 『World Retrieval』. Retrieve word 《Magic stone, usage method》.” (Hayase)

After her finger opened the front cover, the pages flipped through『Faster than the eye can see』.

And so, a few minutes passed before it made a sound and snapped shut.

“I finished looking it up. Tamaki-san, I got it. How to retrieve magic from the crystal stone.” (Hayase)

“… Though I’ve seen it before, it’s amazing…” (Tamaki)

“… It’s amazing. But, I thought that when we were fighting a bit ago there wasn’t so much light.” (Daichi)

“That is because, even though I quickly found the books related to this world’s history, since there are very few books related to the usage of crystal stones, the look up scope got bigger.” (Hayase)

“Hee, it didn’t find enough information… that’s surprising.” (Tamaki)

“Now, let’s start with the explanation. First, there’s a way to use the crystal stone, but… I don’t recommend it.” (Hayase)

“Eh? why?” (Tamaki)

Tamaki, whose treatment from now on was tied to the crystal stone, became impatient. In contrast, Hayase slowly told her in a way easy to understand.

“To begin with the crystal stone is a natural stone that can accumulate the trace amounts of magic contained in the air. To mold the magic, a considerable amount of magic that our bodies cannot withstand was required. For example, they performed an experiment in the past. Since they didn’t know how to extract the magic from the crystal stone, they decided to take it in directly into the body, so they tried eating crystal stones.” (Hayase)

“Do I have to eat the crystal stone…?” (Tamaki)

“To start with, as it was like air, it seems that the surface is brittle. Going back on track, Tamaki-san. What do you think that happened to the test subjects?” (Hayase)

“… … No way, they exploded?” (Tamaki)

“That is correct. Their bodies could not cope with the magic, and blew them up. By the way, when they couldn’t find the way to extract magic from the crystal stone they abandoned the research. In other words-.” (Hayase)

Hayase took the crystal stone from the solidified Tamaki’s hand and returned it to the pouch, then hit her with another blow.

“It looks like Tamaki-san will be nothing but a shield.” (Hayase)

“… … Come on, stop it.” (Tamaki)

Her expectations off, due to what will become of her from now on, Tamaki’s face paled and she sprawled out on the ground.

Story 3-8『Crimson Eyes of Destruction』

The 28th Floor. The temperature was 27 ° C.

As one would expect, this area was hot. It was like summer. After walking for a long time, fighting caused our clothes to be drenched in sweat.

The feeling of it sticking to my body was unpleasant.

"… I should have brought substitute clothes." (Daichi)

"Do you want to use my towel?" (Fuuko) [TN: Hayase will now be referred to as Fuuko in these]

Hayase took out a lovely pink sports towel from her large shoulder bag and passed it to me.

"It's like you brought a store, Hayase." (Daichi)

"I collected all information from『World Retrieval』that I thought was necessary and packed it into this bag. I've also brought male clothes." (Fuuko)

"You bought them?" (Daichi)

"Yes! Because I want to be useful to Katsuragi-kun, I bought them on the way here!" (Fuuko)

"Is that so? Thanks, Hayase." (Daichi)

I patted her head in gratitude. Hayase looked down with a bright red face.

"… N-no, though as a reward… please call me Fuuko." (Fuuko)

"Fuuko." (Daichi)

"Katsuragi-kun!" (Fuuko)

Fuuko was excited and clung to me, rubbing me with her soft cheek.

"… Fuwa~. Katsuragi-kun's scent…" (Fuuko)

"… Fuuko-san? Since I stink of sweat, it's better if you sto-." (Daichi)

"It's fine… Ah, here, your change of clothes." (Fuuko)

"A-ah. But, Fuuko hasn't left for me to change…" (Daichi)

"T-that's right… I'll take your clothes then?" (Fuuko)

"That's no good, Hayase-san. I'll keep them from getting dirty." (Shuri)

Pushing Fuuko aside, Shuri was in front of me waiting for me to undress.

“No, Hamakaze-san. Because my bag is large.” (Fuuko)

“No. It’s fine, I’ll hold them.” (Shuri)

But, then Hamakaze-san wouldn’t be able to fight. It still isn’t my turn.” (Fuuko)

“Even if one of my hands is taken, be at ease and leave it to me to take out demons from the 30th Floor.” (Shuri)

““… Fufufufufu”” (Fuuko, Shuri)

“…” (Daichi)

A virtue-less war between maidens unfolded before me.

… I wonder why. My heart is dancing because two beautiful girls are scrambling to take my clothes.

“No no, it’s dangerous for you two. I’ll look after them. Hey, stand still.” (Tamaki)

From behind, Tamaki began to take off my clothes. She unbuttoned my adventurer’s clothes and took them.

How to say, this exchange… it looked like we were a married couple.

“Tamaki. Leave the rest to me.” (Daichi)

“I-I already know. Though please… try to finish before I am killed.” (Tamaki)

Tamaki had cold sweat on her brow. It was caused by the two girls’ gazes piercing her back.

“Alright… then, I’m counting on you.” (Daichi)

I followed up feeling sorry for Tamaki, and quickly took the clothes from her.

“… Nn. This is good. Let’s advance quickly. We’re close to the 30th Floor.” (Tamaki)

Tamaki was talking fast while walking briskly away from something to escape. Shuri and Fuuko were chasing her.

… Ah, my shoulders were grabbed.

“Sorry, Tamaki… it’s okay because you are the shield. You’ll surely be able to do it.” (Daichi)

“… Good luck, Tamaki… if it’s you, you can do it…” (Leadred)

Looking at Leadred, she was imitating a Buddha chant. Which reminded me of what Shuri did to her a while ago. I wonder what Shuri did to cause this…

I pitied Tamaki since Shuri and Fuuko reached her.

It was a scene that made me think of such a thing

◇◆◇◆◇◆◇◆◇◆◇◆

The 30th Floor's stair room.

An unexplored room that has not yet been traversed by Samejima. That guy had finished capturing all the way to here. He captured the 30th Floor, according to what Miare coaxed out of him. Everywhere except here was definitely captured. In other words, we had no information.

Overestimating our strength too much would be a third-rate negligence.

I won't let Tamaki use her magic until it naturally recovers all the way, so Fuuko and I had no choice but to have our temperatures regulated by Shuri.

I had Leadred guard the two, and Tamaki and I entered the room ready for battle.

Of course, depending on the situation Shuri and Leadred would also come in, and Fuuko would use her『Crimson Eyes of Destruction』.

"Tamaki, are you ready?" (Daichi)

"Yeah, of course." (Tamaki)

Tamaki had the throwing knives that she bought before between her fingers on both hands. They seem to be for offense and defense.

"Alright… let's go!" (Daichi)

I opened the door and Tamaki threw ten knives as the first move. They curved to the left and right and went flying towards what was enshrined in the room.

With meat falling off of its body, the Bone Knight's eyes were bloodshot. It held an ominous black katana in its right hand, and a pure white katana in its left.

"It uses dual katanas! Wind!" (Daichi)

I accelerated Tamaki's knifes with my magic. However, the swordsman knocked them all down with both of its swords.

And then, it stood up and leapt at us in a straight line.

"Tch! Let's go, Tamaki!" (Daichi)

“I already know!” (Tamaki)

Tamaki defended against the black katana with her knife, and tried to kick away the bone leg. However, the Bone Knight stabbed its white katana into the ground to stop the blow.

“Na-!” (Tamaki)

Reacting to the swordsman, Tamaki nearly tripped. Once again, the Bone Knight came at her with its black katana from above.

“Wind!” (Daichi)

I shifted the trajectory of the black katana slightly to the side. Tamaki used the chance to escape.

“… … …!” (Daichi)

Its sharp gaze turned to me. It looks like it changed its target to me.

The Bone Knight prepared the right side of its body, bending at the waist—and was already approaching me with the point of its sword.

“Woah!?” (Daichi)

I bent backwards to dodge. I couldn’t see how fast the Bone Knight’s momentum was.

I, who barely evaded death, forgot about regaining my balance, and as I was surrounded the Bone Knight with an earth shield on four sides around it.

“Multi-Guard, Crush!” (Daichi) [TN: Again, Kanji for Multiple Earth Walls instead of the Multiple Ice Walls that Tamaki/Fantra use]

“Ah, that’s my technique!” (Tamaki)

Ignoring Tamaki, I opened the hands that I had clenched tightly.

There was no choice for it to escape the earth shield but to leap up out of it.

“… …!” (Bone Knight)

Sure enough, the Bone Knight retreated to the sky. However, I already assumed that it would.

“Leadred! Shuri!” (Daichi)

“I got it!” (Leadred)

“Yes!” (Shuri)

The two understood what I wanted simply by my calling their names and attacked the Bone Knight who had taken to the air.

“Ogre Flame!” (Leadred)

Leadred hit it will three of her Unique Ability’s magic simultaneously. The Bone Knight skillfully repelled them using its two katanas.

“Break!” (Shuri)

Shuri’s hit pierced the Bone Knight’s chest. Furthermore, she planned to destroy it from the inside.

“Wind Blade!” (Shuri)

“… … …!?” (Bone Knight)

The wind blade overflowed from it, and that guy’s body flew apart.

“I did it!” (Shuri)

“No, not yet!” (Leadred)

Shuri was delighted while still midair, but as Leadred said the Bone Knight sneered at them with a cackle from its jaws.

“Undead…!” (Shuri)

We were aware of the threat posed by the undead tribe’s ability to revive so long as there was magic.

I’m sure that being brought into a war of attrition would affect the rest of the dungeon capture.

Though I wanted to save it for a little longer, there was no other choice. I used it.

“Everyone, get away from that guy! And, Fuuko!” (Daichi)

“Yes!” (Fuuko)

“When I seal that guy’s movement, use『Crimson Eyes of Destruction』!” (Daichi)

“I understand! I’ll show Katsuragi-kun that I am helpful!” (Fuuko)

Fuuko was fired up without hesitation. I consecutively invoke magic to stop its movements.

“Multi-Guard! Earth Chain Binding!” (Daichi)

In order to keep the Bone Knight from escaping the shield I also bound its body with earth chains.

Though that guy was tenaciously resisting the bindings.

“Do it now! Earth Chain Binding!” (Daichi)

Once again, it moved its arm to cut the bindings with its sword. Vertically and horizontally, the Bone Knight cut at the bindings that were building up.

“Now! Do it, Fuuko!!” (Daichi)

When I looked at her after giving the signal—there were many layers of magic squares in a straight line in front of her developing.

“Crimson light. Now, transform into magic bullets and destroy my enemies.” (Fuuko)

The shining red light increased its intensity. Magic was poured into the magic squares, and it started.

“『Crimson Eyes of Destruction』!” (Fuuko)

Crimson-colored rays from her eyes.

Though it started small, whenever it passed through a magic square it increased in size and became gigantic, and in the end was large enough to erase the Bone Knight.

“… …!!” (Bone Knight)

It swallowed its death throes. When the light disappeared, the Bone Knight hadn’t left behind even a single speck of dust. It’s as if it’s existence itself was annihilated.

“I… I… did it…” (Fuuko)

Because a large amount of her magic was consumed at once, Fuuko’s breath was rough.

Even with the Bone Knight missing, we didn’t see it revive.

As usual, the wall broke partially to show the way to the next floor. We pushed on.

–At least, we thought so but…

“… This is…” (Shuri)

“I thought that this would be troublesome.” (Daichi)

“It’s a lie…” (Tamaki)

“This will be troublesome won’t it…” (Leadred)

“…?” (Fuuko)

Only Fuuko, who didn’t know the strange situation, tilted her head to the side.

Conversely, the four of us that knew of its existence had four different reactions to it, though we all sighed out.

Now there were two things, one to the left of us and the other to the right.

In addition, it wasn’t the stairs, but the transfer magic squares that should only appear once you capture the bottom layer of the dungeon that appeared.

Story 3-9『Progressing Separately』

So far we progressed on a schedule, nothing good would come about from advancing without thinking.

However, now, there were two transfer magic formations in front of us.

Is this a trap? Are we being invited?

“What do we do, Daichi-sama?” (Shuri)

“Let me think for a moment. Fuuko. Can you examine these with『World Retrieval』?” (Daichi)

“… I’m sorry. I already did that, but it had no response. There doesn’t seem to be any cases of this happening in the past.” (Fuuko)

“Is that so… don’t worry about it. I didn’t expect there to be anything anyways. It’s not your fault, there’s just not any info at all.” (Daichi)

Having cleared this floor, we’re the first to get this far in the dungeon.

That is to say, this is the first time this has been experienced.

“So getting new information is impossible…?” (Daichi)

In that case, there’s no choice but to decide what to do from now on.

Even after looking around again the stairs didn’t appear as expected.

I came back here, with the two things behind me.

Does we capture the dungeon simultaneously by splitting up? Or do we gamble and choose one?

“… Tamaki, which one do you think is good?” (Daichi)

Since she was nearby I asked for her opinion.

“… I wanted you to rely on me, but Katsuragi. You, aren’t you just deliberately entangling me in this?” (Tamaki)

Tamaki looked at me with jittery eyes of suspicion. She was vigilant and suspected me because recently she suffered through something much worse because of me.

“That’s not it. I just thought that you’d make a sound judgement. Because neither Shuri nor Fuuko would deny my choice right now.” (Daichi)

I told the last part to her in a whisper near her ear.

Shuri was affected by Fuuko and lost her composure… No, it's probably better to say that she is just agreeing with everything I say.

Anyhow, the situation was amusing.

For some reason they didn't want to damage my mood, and are desperate to please me. Even if she didn't do that I'd be fond of Shuri.

"… Well, I don't mind it if that's the case…" (Tamaki)

Though in her place, the advisor role is being taken reluctantly.

"Katsuragi. What is your main goal?" (Tamaki)

"Killing Samejima." (Daichi)

"Right. Then, spending time here is bad. And if we bet on the wrong side it would be bad, and has the potential of returning from this dungeon after capturing it. On the other hand our status values are stupidly high individually, so the demerits of splitting up are low… Do you understand what I'm saying?" (Tamaki)

"To progress separately… right?" (Daichi)

She nodded in satisfaction to by reply. Her explanation was convincing, and the fact was we didn't have much time.

"Then, we'll divide into two pairs. A group of two and a group of three…" (Daichi)

"What are you saying? It should be four people and one person." (Tamaki)

"… Tamaki…! For our sake, you are using your body as a scapegoat…!" (Daichi)

"Yeeeeees? You, are you misunderstanding me?" (Tamaki)

"Eh? Didn't you say you'd bare the burden alone?" (Daichi)

"No! Katsuragi should be alone and us girls in a group of four!" (Tamaki)

It was easy to understand that Tamaki was mad with her *Muki* sound effect. She had an interesting facial expression on.

"I was joking. Could you tell me the reason?" (Daichi)

"Talking like that is bad, Katsuragi. Honestly, it's not like it particularly matters if you die, so you don't need a guard. And it won't be a problem if you take some elixirs." (Tamaki)

"… Well, that is right." (Daichi)

As far as war potential goes, I think that's the best. If we split into groups of three and two, I would have tried to be with Shuri.

Leadred's vanguard, Shuri. Tamaki that specializes in ice magic. Fuuko that has the strongest power so long as she has magic.

I think that they wouldn't lose to the last floor's boss.

"Then, it's decided." (Tamaki)

"Yeah, that's right. Alright everyone listen up. The left and right will be… wait, what's wrong Shuri? Your cheek is puffed." (Daichi)

"No, it's nothing… it's just that I've been thinking that you've been on good terms with Yui-chan lately… I'm not pouting or anything." (Shuri)

Bothersome. Shuri has been very concerned about her recently. It became especially obvious after Tamaki and Fuuko became companions. Though, it is cute.

Originally, Shuri was like a flower, so seeing her behave like a spoiled child made me happy.

Usually a part of her was subduing her true feelings, and I had hoped that I could see her honest feelings.

"Shuri. It is Shuri that I like." (Daichi)

"… Then, listen to me too." (Shuri)

"However, at the same time this isn't the time for that. I want to stay together with everyone here forever. For that reason it is necessary to make the right decision. Please understand." (Daichi)

"… …" (Shuri)

Shuri was silent. During the gloomy atmosphere, Fuuka with red cheeks and the red oni that was unable to read the atmosphere snuggled close to me.

"Katsuragi-kun… I'm so happy. To say that you want to be with me forever…" (Fuuko)

"Yeah. But I said everyone?" (Daichi)

"I know… though if we die, we'll be together forever in the netherworld… fufu." (Fuuko)

"No, because Hero-sama can't die." (Leadred)

Fuuko felt a chill on her back from Leadred's accurate tsukkomi.

I burst out unintentionally.

"W-was something funny?" (Tamaki)

"No, my bad my bad. That's all." (Daichi)

Fuu— I took a deep breath to change my feelings from Katsuragi Daichi the adventurer to Katsuragi Daichi the avenger.

"… Alright. Then, I'll take the right one you four take the magic formation on the left." (Daichi)

"Ah, can I get the potions and elixirs?" (Tamaki)

"Yeah. Is this good?" (Daichi)

I took all of the potions and half of the elixirs out of the pouch and handed them to Tamaki.

Potions are for Stamina and Magic. Elixirs have a lasting recovery effect on Magic.

With so many of them nothing should be a problem for the girls. There was also something I added for Tamaki to use in an emergency.

"That's plenty." (Tamaki)

"That so? Tamaki, what time is it now?" (Daichi)

"11:00. We need to advance the schedule. Samejima's group will be here in an hour." (Tamaki)

It was three floors per hour right? Taking into consideration our speed until now it should be no problem.

"Using this magic formation, we may not be able to return to the previous floor. So, make sure to preserve a suitable body temperature and stay hydrated." (Daichi)

"Are you my mother? I know already. I'll do it properly." (Tamaki)

"Then, OK. Let's not waste time." (Daichi)

We divided into two groups and stood at our magic formations.

"I pray that you will fight well." (Leadred)

"… Daichi-sama should also be careful." (Shuri)

"Well then, see you later." (Tamaki)

"It'll be lonely for you but… endure it." (Fuuko)

As the four got onto the transfer magic formation, they left parting words.

"… I should also get going huh?" (Daichi)

Seeing off Fuuko last, I also drew my sword and jumped onto the magic formation.

◇◆◇◆◇◆◇◆◇◆◇◆◇◆

“Is everyone alright?” (—)

We were at the entrance to the【Scorching Execution Ground】. Today, I called out to greet my party members.

“I have no problems.” (—)

“I’m also ready to go at any time.” (—)

Sajima and Kijima that had been here for the dungeon capture since the beginning seemed to be in a rush.

“I’m also good, Hero-sama.” (—)

“… I’m also alright.” (—)

The woman I got from this area—Arianne had pink hair and a huge chest. The child with light blue short bob hair was Selen. The two people that rushed to me calling me『Hero-sama』nonchalantly on the first day were locals that had my style and face became my women. [TN: Such a run-on. Two women with faces he liked were from local area. They ran to him on first day calling him Hero-sama. They are his now.]

Since then, they have kept me company every night.

Though that still wasn’t enough.

Because I haven’t laid my hands on Sajima.

The girl who reigned over the academy, Sajima Nanami.

Though I thought that she was ordinary, it seems that she was smarter than I thought.

Even though I’ve planned for it to just be the two of use every night, the girl disappears without telling anyone. I wonder if it’s a coincidence. Or maybe on purpose.

Predicting that was very vexing to me. I’ll have to get information about her from Tamaki next time. Because Hamakaze died.

“… Hm? Is there something on my face?” (Nanami)

“Oh, no it’s nothing. Recently, you’ve been in a good mood.” (Samejima)

“… Was it easy to figure out?” (Nanami)

“Yeah. Anyone would figure it out from your cheeks.” (Samejima)

“Is that so… You know, to tell you the truth… you know, I hope the wish comes true.” (Nanami)

“Wish? Claria’s?” (Samejima)

“Claria-sama, huh… I thought she’d told Samejima-kun… I know the truth.” (Nanami)

“Na-!?” (Samejima)

Startled, my voice escaped. I looked around in a hurry, but Kijima’s group was talking and didn’t seem to notice my blunder.

“… Hey, you know something like that?” (Samejima)

I asked in a hushed voice so that we wouldn’t be heard. Then, she nodded her head with a *Kokun*.

“Yeah. A wish will be granted if you reach the bottom level of this dungeon…” (Nanami)

“… Is that true?” (Samejima)

“I think there’s no doubt since I heard it directly from Claria-sama. ……Perhaps, you might have noticed, but me being away at night is related to Claria-sama” (Nanami)
Sajima said so with a smile.

It was unbelievable, but it didn’t feel like she was lying. The story made sense. Perhaps, there was a demon king at the bottom of this dungeon.

To begin with I have never heard talk about a demon king appearing since I came to this world. It might be because the demon king is hidden somewhere. In that case, the dungeon is the most likely spot.

Though I suspected its existence, that goddess did summon us here.

Though I didn’t believe it entirely, it was necessary to capture this dungeon either way.

It was obvious that I was motivated.

“… Sajima. We’ll advance more than usual today!” (Samejima)

“Al—-right!” (Nanami)

Sajima gave her best smile to date in response to my declaration

Story 3-10 『Girls』

"… Hot." (Daichi)

I was in a place hot enough to be suited for the dungeon name after being transferred by the magic formation. The wall of the dungeon was red hot because of the heat.

Any hotter and I'll melt. This can't be compared with what it was like earlier.

"Ice wind." (Daichi)

I adjusted the environment around myself to a suitable temperature. Not too hot, not too cold. However, I had to constantly pay attention to the amount of magic I used so I didn't quickly run out.

Instead of using magic, defeating them with a sword was better. I slayed them without magic, though where was the Shield when you wanted it… Tamaki wasn't here.

Shuri also wasn't here, I was getting a bit lonely…

To be frank, I wanted to get cozy with Shuri. I wanted to embrace her soft body entirely in my arms. To enjoy her sweet scent…

"No… that's no good. What am I thinking…" (Daichi)

I may be losing my mind in this heat. The only problem, when I entered the range where I was spreading my 『Ice Wind』, there was a by all means impossible sizzling sound of steam.

Perhaps I was sent to a fairly lower floor. If so, I was pretty lucky.

As as expected, the transfer magic formations may have been an invitation from the guardian. If that were the case, I wanted to be moved directly to the bottom floor's stair room.

Was there a need to buy some time?… In that case, Shuri's group got the winning hand.

"Guess I should hurry up and rejoin them?" (Daichi)

I resumed searching the dungeon at double the pace.

◇◆◇◆◇◆◇◆◇◆◇◆◇◆◇◆

"Uo-!?" (Leadred)

"Kya-!" (Shuri)

"Wa-!?" (Tamaki)

"Hyau!?" (Fuuko)

Bam, bam, bam, *posun*, making three loud sounds and a cute one, we were transferred to a stairway. It was illuminated by lit torches that were encased in old-looking containers along the walls.

The stairs were in a spiral rather than the short, straight type.

Fortunately we were spared from the worse scenario of everyone tumbling off.

… Though the first person to be transferred, Leadred, was under us and let out a groan from our impact.

"… T-then, shall we?" (Fuuko)

Hayase-san, who was on the top and took the least damage, looked through her bag for recovery medicine when I heard her say that.

"… We have no choice but to go." (Tamaki)

Answering her question that had been solved from the start, I went down step by step. Behind me, the formation was Yui-chan, Hayase-san, then Leadred-san.

"It's not as hot as I thought it would be." (Fuuko)

"Yeah. I've felt better since a moment ago." (Shuri)

"Is Tamaki using magic?" (Leadred)

"No. Though I don't know why, this place seems to be disconnected from the dungeon's rule… were we transferred to another dungeon?" (Tamaki)

It's unfortunate… but I can't say for certain. Even from a while ago, the type of stairs were different from the ones before in 【Scorching Execution Ground】.

… Oh, I wonder where Katsuragi-kun is…

"Even though we don't know, we need to advance… shall we go as far as possible?" (Tamaki)

Again, we traveled through the dungeon at Yui-chan's words. Silence weighed on us, especially without any particular conversation.

Though I don't think we are on bad terms with each other, Hayase-san is here this time… we weren't able to bring up any topics with her. Yui-chan and I didn't read many books, and Leadred-san wasn't the kind of person to mind these kinds of things…

Some way or another I think Yui-chan didn't like this atmosphere…

"… We have some free time for girl's talk." (Tamaki)

After a few minutes of nothing but descending the stairs, sure enough, Yui-chan dropped the bomb.

Saying that was a taboo, and I felt like hitting my close friend in the head. Because, all of us girl classmates like the same man.

But, I think that she deliberately chose this topic because she knew that.

To mutually clarify our feelings… probably.

“Girl’s talk? What does that mean? (Leadred)

“Leadred-san doesn’t know huh~. It’s when women mutually talk about the people they like you know? Does Leadred-san like Katsuagi?” (Tamaki)

“No, I have no romantic feelings for him. I do respect him though.” (Leadred)

“See, that’s what it is like.” (Tamaki)

“I see. I understand now.” (Leadred)

Yui-chan removed Leadred-san from the loop. With this, it became a genuine three-way showdown.

“Ah, even though I don’t want you to misunderstand, don’t worry, it’s not like I plan on ducking out. Please, don’t glare at me like that!” (Tamaki)

Yui-chan bowed with her hands raised up in front of her face.

How awful, I definitely wasn’t doing that.

“It may bee too late, but… If you don’t want, we don’t have to…” (Tamaki)

“Were you someone to draw back from such a thing… Tamaki-san?” (Fuuko)

Hayase sighed half in amazement. I thought the same.

“I-I mean, it’s because you two were glaring at be so intensely.” (Tamaki)

“… That’s because I’m burning with hostility towards Hamakaze-san.” (Fuuko)

Hayase-san asserted without losing her calm. She gave me a sidelong glance with her red eyes.

However, her expression immediately softened.

“… What, it was a joke. Though I’m certainly envious of Hamakaze-san, I am not jealous.” (Fuuko) [TN: Remember that jealousy is when you think someone is taking your stuff, and envy is when you want someone else’s stuff.]

“Oh, is that so?” (Shuri)

… Yui-chan. A question came to mind, though I knew it was bad.

… Though I began saying it anyways.

“Yes. I don’t mind being second or third. As long as I get some love, shouldn’t I be happy?” (Fuuko)

But, she continued.

“The moment when, by appealing to him, I become Katsuragi-kun’s number one, please bear with it.” (Fuuko)

Though it was quivering, Hayase-san was making a perfect smile.

… It was a declaration of war.

I accepted.

“… That will never happen. I mean, I won’t hand him over.” (Shuri)

“Fufufu. Katsuragi-kun is also a human, his mind can change you know?” (Fuuko)

If this were a manga there were surely be sparks flying. Mine and Hayase-san’s gazes crossed.

She was not budging an inch.

Therefore, made sure to demonstrate to her my dominance.

“I… took his first time. Katsurag-kun’s.” (Shuri)

“Eh-…!?” (Fuuko)

Hayase-san’s expression crumbled. It seems that that was unexpected even for her. Yui-chan blushed. Perhaps, she heard my voice during that time. [TL: lit. ‘that time’ = ‘that love affair’]

“Therefore, I wonder if it is still possible for Hayase-san to catch up.” (Shuri)

“T-that doesn’t make a difference. Because I will use my own methods to be with him without fail.” (Fuuko)

“Don’t forget about me… I also want to be with him…” (Tamaki)

“I haven’t forgotten. Rather, I’ve already been vigilant of Tamaki-san.” (Fuuko)

Yui-chan’s grumbling was quickly countered by Hayase-san.

I agreed with her opinion.

“Eh, why?” (Tamaki)

“What do you mean why…? Yui-chan. Recently, you’ve been together with Katsuragi-kun. Conversing so vibrantly…” (Shuri)

“You two think I’m that close to him?” (Tamaki)

“And didn’t Katsuragi-kun make plans with Yui-chan before? To win against Fantra… he kissed you. [TN: lit. ‘Harshly kissed’]

“… … Heeeh” (Fuuko)

“I-it was inevitable! We had to in order to win against that guy! Katsuragi was also unwilling! Rather, Hayase-san is scary!” (Tamaki)

Yui-chan managed to do something weird by energetically shaking her head and at the same time shaking both hands in denial.

I thought she looked very flustered.

When I was thinking about how to tease her, I heard a voice from behind.

“… Ah-, I don’t mean to interrupt but… you guys stopped moving a while ago.” (Leadred)

“”””… … … Ah.””” (Fuuko, Shuri, Tamaki)

When Leadred-san pointed it out we noticed that our surroundings hadn’t changed since a while ago.

Maybe we became too passionate in the middle of it.

Each of us gave a wry smile, hurriedly reformed the line, and began advancing once again.

To cover lost ground, we descended in silence.

After continuing for about ten minutes, there was an open door. The stairway ended there.

“… Everyone. Prepare for battle.” (Shuri)

Everyone took out their weapons. I also took out my dagger with an underhand grip.

Running through at once, we passed through the door.

Our field of view expanded. The end of the stairway was connected to the room. The interior design was different.

However, there was one woman before us.

Her physique was not like a human's. She was covered with tufts of light brown fur.

Her face was remarkable. A nose like a dog's. Whiskers sprouting from her cheeks. Ears coming from her hair.

"… Welcome, to the last floor of the【Scorching Execution Ground】. I am the one who invited you here, Lily Shuraham, leader of the Beastman tribe." (Lily)

A corner of her mouth lifted up and we could see her sharp canines.

"Well, you have my regards." (Lily)

Story 3-11 『Labyrinth Corridor』

Lily Shuraham. I'd heard that name recently. Miare-san told us that was one of the Six Demon Generals yesterday.

"Hey, Akina! It's been a while!" (Lily)

Shuraham of the Beastman tribe saw and called out to Leadred, who was behind us.

"Yo, Lily." (Leadred)

"It sure has been a while. There's a lot of things I want to talk to you about, however…" (Lily)

Shuraham pointed at us with three of her fingers.

"Are these children really that Hero-sama's escorts?" (Lily)

"Though I'm one as well." (Leadred)

"Heeh… So you surrendered. As I heard, he must be a very powerful person. Our Hero-sama." (Lily)

Shuraham delightfully folded her arms and nodded. As she heard… that means someone who knew of the situation up till now told her.

Was it a comrade? Or an enemy?

"Umm… even though it's unfortunate since you just reunited after a long time… Shuraham-san." (Shuri)

"Lily is fine." (Lily)

"Then, Lily. I'll get straight to the point, was it Miare-san that told you about the situation?" (Shuri)

"Nope. I got it from my own source. Ah, such a grim look will spoil that beautiful face! Like this one here!" (Lily)

"Ouch! That hurt, Lily. Cut it out!" (Leadred)

Lily moved to Leadred-san and firmly slapped her on the back without holding back.

… Though I didn't let down my guard, this person didn't seem like she wanted to fight. Compared to the guardians up till now she was much friendlier.

"Cut it out! Stop stretching my cheeks!" (Leadred)

"No~, your skin is soft as usual! I'm so envious of you!" (Lily)

Leadred-san's cheeks being stretched even now, she was still being teased. Since Leadred-san also didn't raise her hands, it was unlikely she was a bad person.

"… Phew… Ah, my bad, you three. I missed doing that." (Lily)

Lily seemed to be satisfied from playing with Leadred-san and turned her fluffy appearance towards us.

In constrast, Leadred-san already seemed to be worn out.

"Umm… Lily-san, are you the guardian?" (Tamaki)

Yui-chan asked the dog-like human.

"That's right. Ah, however, don't misunderstand me, but I don't intend to oppose you like those fools up till now." (Lily)

"Uu-" (Leadred)

Leadred reacted to the part about fools. Lily continued.

"Basically, why a test of strength? What would we do if we lose our so important Hero-sama. Fantra, that rascal… Well, he got what he deserved." (Lily)

"You also know about the fight with Fantra?" (Tamaki)

"Yeah, about how Hero-sama defeated him? I know about all of you. Shuri and Fuuko and the Shield." (Lily)

"What's with that? I could only feel spite in that information!" (Tamaki)

Yui-chan got angry and was outraged

"Lily-san. My real name isn't Shield, it is Tamaki Yuina." (Tamaki)

"What, is that so? It's troublesome since you're already the Shield so that's fine right?" (Lily)

"… Ah-. I remember talking with Katsuragi. It's fine already. It's fine, I am a Shield." (Tamaki)

Yui-chan had somewhat distant eyes. It's like she had completely given up.

Lily continued talking, ignoring Yui-chan.

"So then, you three are Hero-sama's bride candidates then?" (Lily)

""""Eh-!?"""" (Fuuko, Shuri, Tamaki)

Our voices were synchronized.

The topic suddenly changed. Moreover, since we were talking about a rather serious matter, we were even more surprised.

Why did it suddenly become that sort of a talk now? There weren't any signs for it either.

"Hmm? What's wrong? Could it be, was I mistaken?" (Lily)

"No, that's…" (Shuri)

"A-ahaha." (Tamaki)

"Mmm?" (Lily)

Lily stared at us inquisitively from our evasive responses. Tilting her head to the side, she suddenly clapped as though understanding.

"So that was it! You've already decided the bride!" (Lily)

"How did you come to that!? His bride hasn't been decided ye—" (Tamaki)

"I am Katsuragi Daichi's bride." (Shuri)

"Shuri-chan!? What are you saying without hesitation!?" (Tamaki)

"I mean, think about it. Katsuragi-kun likes me. I like Katsurag-kun. We both share these feelings. Aren't I think only one to meet the requirements of a bride?" (Shuri)

"Ku-… because it's somewhat logical it's difficult to refuse…!" (Tamaki)

"Please wait, Hamakaze-san. I am also one of the brides." (Fuuko)

"What are you saying, Hayase-san? There can only be one wife you know?" (Shuri)

Yes, one woman could only give her love to one man.This was common sense that everybody knew.

Though I told her the meaning of such a thing, it didn't seem to get through to her. Hayase-san wore a triumphant smile.

"… …Hamakaze-san? Are you misunderstanding something?" (Fuuko)

"Misunderstanding?" (Shuri)

"I told you earlier, that I don't mind being second nor even third. The world we live in right now has a different culture than Japan. Polygamy. In Rostalgia a man can accept any number of women. Right, Lily-san?" (Fuuko)

"Yeah, that's right. So you three were already taken by Hero-sama…" (Lily)

"Yes! That is exactly it!" (Fuuko)

“Ah, Hayase-san! That’s wrong! I’m also-!” (Shuri)

“Would you two cut it out for once!” (Tamaki)

“Ow-!?” (Fuuko)

“Kya-!” (Shuri)

Dull pain ran through my head. Yui-chan let her fists drop on mine and Hayase-san’s heads.

“Sorry, Lily-san. These children tend to lose their minds when it comes to that guy.” (Tamaki)

“Hahaha! It’s fine, that just proves that they love Hero-sama!” (Lily)

“That’s… well, I agree. Though, let’s that aside for now, Lily-san. Could we get down to business?” (Tamaki)

“What do you mean?” (Lily)

“You purposely summoned us here to the bottom floor to talk with you… is my guess correct?” (Tamaki)

Rather than responding to Yui-chan’s inquiry, Lily smiled like a ferocious beast.

Her atmosphere suddenly changed. A heavy pressure suddenly crushed us from above.

-“That’s about it. Be that as it may, I don’t intend to oppose the Hero-sama. Since if he was able to defeat Akina and Fantra, then he’s competent enough, if it’s for the current world… Well, though I say that, since that idiot of a husband of mine is very hotblooded…” (Lily)

“Eh, Lily-san, you have a husband?” (Tamaki)

“We have the firm relationship of a husband and wife. I think that he wants to fight the Hero-sama. Because of that, I will be your opponent. That’s why, Mirage Curtain”. (Lily)

A purple veil appeared around Yui-chan and I after Lily finished her chant-omitted magic.

“W-what is this?” (Tamaki)

“… A magic barrier?” (Shuri)

Striking the veil with my dagger didn’t even leave a scratch.

Realizing that we were becoming impatient, the one who cast the magic soon followed up to calm us down.

“Rest assured. This doesn’t mean that I’m going to kill you. I want you two to take my test. I want to see whether or not you have the ability to support Hero-sama… alright?” (Lily)

“… Lily-san? Wait a second, I don’t understand what is happening…” (Tamaki)

Yui-chan was perplexed. She was trying to be calm but I was in the same state. I was doubting the memory of that friendly woman from a moment ago.

“Shield. I recognize Hero-sama, but that does not mean I have recognized you all.” (Lily)

She continued to admonish us.

“Is that alright? The ones at the side of the hero who has subdued demons need suitable ability and feelings for him. I’m just going to ascertain if you two posses both qualities. Sorry for behaving like this, but… Leadred, you stay out of it.” (Lily)

“I don’t want to hear that from you… Shuri! Tamaki! Lily is not trying to kill you guys, so relax. This fellow, she’s always liked to get involved with people’s love.” (Leadred)

“That’s rude. I try to make them succeed.” (Lily)

“I remember that Miare would always call you a『Hindrance』. Well, that’s a story for another time. For now, focus on quickly returning from smashing the test.” (Leadred)

“W-will you stop so that I can start already!? In my name—“ (Lily)

“… Umm…” (Fuuko)

Earning Leadred’s approval, Lily began to start a new chant, but Hayase-san shyly rose her hand to interrupt.

“Hm? What is it?” (Lily)

“Why was I left out?” (Hayase)

It seemed that Hayase-san wasn’t pleased with being left out of the examination for『Those who support Hero-sama』so she asked why from Lily.

“Because you seemed to be the successor to Fantra Angas of the Six Demon Generals, I passed you already. Do you understand?” (Lily) [TN: I thought Tamaki would have been the successor… seeing as how she got his Unique Ability… /confused]

“No… with all of the words that you suddenly brought up I wasn’t able to understand it all and was overtaken… though I don’t think it’s fair.” (Fuuko)

“Oh? Then, are you saying you also want to receive this test?” (Lily)

“Yes. Since… I want to be near Katsuragi-kun both in name and reality.” (Fuuko)

Hayase-san glanced at us. The crimson in her eyes gave off the illusion that her fighting spirit was burning.

Receiving her gaze, a switch turn on in me.

“… Alright, I understand. Then, Fuuko will also be tested.” (Lily)

“Thank you very much.” (Fuuko)

“You have very good manners. Then, let’s start. Mirage Curtain.” (Lily)

Identical to the one around us, a purple veil surrounded Hayase-san.

“In my name, I invoke the contract. King of the light spirits. Bestow the tribulations unto them. Reward those who triumph, punish those who fail.” (Lily)

Lily struck her palms together.

“—Labyrinth Corridor.”(Lily)

When she finished chanting, I suddenly lost strength and relinquished consciousness.

◇◆◇◆◇◆◇◆◇◆◇◆◇◆◇◆

Before I knew it, there was… total darkness?

The ceiling, as well as the walls and everything else was covered with black. I was in that kind of a place.

“… Where is this?” (Shuri)

『This space is a combination of my Unique Ability『Beast Illusion』and the darkness magic『Labyrinth Corridor』.』(Lily)

“Where-!?” (Shuri)

I looked around when I heard Lily’s voice respond to my monologue. However, I couldn’t see her anywhere.

『There is no use in looking for me. I am no here. From now on you will be receiving the first trial to clear.』 (Lily)

“The first trial?” (Shuri)

『Yes. That is—』 (Lily)

My vision suddenly lit up. I covered my eyes from the sudden dazzling light with my arm. My eyes finally grew accustomed to the light and I looked around—at the same moment I did so, I blinked repeatedly as I doubted my eyes.

A screen with an image on it came into sight. However, the problem what was in the image.

“… How come… this…?” (Shuri)

It was the building of our former world’s Okinomiya Private Academy, where we went to.

Seeing my reaction of blank surprise, Lily who was observing from somewhere announced.

『The first trial. Make the Hero-sama from your original world—fall in love with you.』 (Lily)

Story 3-12『Contradiction』

I have to make Katsuragi-kun fall in love with me.

Lily told me that was the requirement for the first trial.

『I searched through Shuri's, Shield's, and Fuuko's memories to create this world. Speaking of which, when you say『Start』the trial will commence.』(Lily)

"… You can do that?" (Shuri)

『Yeah.』(Lily)

Lily answered with a short affirmation.

"Could you tell me conditions to succeed?" (Shuri)

『You have to make Hero-sama—Katsuragi Daichi fall in love with you in order to satisfy the conditions. However, confessing from the start will cause a restart. I'm sure you know more about this place than me. Is this your school? I've never seen it.』(Lily)

… I see.

Roughly putting it, this is like a dating sim… I guess?

I am the player and Katsuragi-kun is the capture target.

… What, that's easy.

I just need to convey my feelings to Katsuragi-kun by keeping him company. That's all.

This trial is nothing. Perhaps Lily thought it would be impossible to love Katsuragi-kun's appearance from when we were at school.

If so, that was a big mistake.

『Also, take into consideration that you three are each in separate spaces. This trial will progress simultaneously. Of course, the contents are the same. Those who complete this trial will go on to the second trial. If you pass that safely I will recognize you. Sound good?』(Lily)

"… Yeah, I don't mind." (Shuri)

『Alright. If there's no problem, shall you go?』(Lily)

"I accept your offer. Start!" (Shuri)

When I said the keyword, the screen emitted a light from my signal and a flash shot out and wrapped around me.

◇◆◇◆◇◆◇◆◇◆◇◆◇◆

“What is this…?” (Tamaki)

I was amazed. An image of Okinomiya Private Academy was depicted before me.

『I searched through Shuri’s, Shield’s, and Fuuko’s memories to create this world. Speaking of which, when you say『Start』the trial will commence.』(Lily)

“Another world, huh… So, will we be undertaking the trial inside this mirage?” (Tamaki)

『That’s right. Ah, it’s safe. You guys can’t die in there.』(Lily)

“So… how did you create this?” (Tamaki)

I mean, don’t freely look through my memories at your own convenience.

『This space is a combination of my Unique Ability『Beast Illusion』and the darkness magic『Labyrinth Corridor』.』(Lily)

“What kind of Unique Ability is it?” (Tamaki)

『… … … …』(Lily)

… Silence.

So she won’t tell me it so lightly… only an idiot would reveal their power as a Six Demon General.

“Anyway… I have no choice… will you explain the contents?” (Tamaki)

『You have to make Hero-sama—Katsuragi Daichi fall in love with you in order to satisfy the conditions. However, confessing from the start will cause a restart. I’m sure you know more about this place than me. Is this your school? I’ve never seen it.』(Lily)

“Is it possible to replay over and over from the beginning?” (Tamaki)

『… … … …』(Lily)

“I’ll take your silence as a yes.” (Tamaki)

『… … … …』(Lily)

… I got the feeling that the number of her silences had been abruptly increasing since a while ago.

Does she have the motivation for this…?

Weren't the capture conditions half-hearted? The definition was vague as well.

"Hey, Lily-san. I'd be grateful for a seriously accurate explanation you know?" (Tamaki)

『You have to make Hero-sama—Katsuragi Daichi fall in love with you in order to satisfy the conditions. However, confessing from the start will cause a restart. I'm sure you know more about this place than me. Is this your school? I've never seen it.』(Lily)

"… I have the feeling you said that a moment ago?" (Tamaki)

Our conversation made me think that she was picking a fight with me. If that's the case, I'll flood her with complaints, as this no doubt gets the recognition of a so-called 'crappy game'.

I wonder why those were the clear conditions?

Even so, that was a sudden change in attitude a while ago.

I was suspicious of the need for this trial in the first place.

To begin with, was there a meaning in making Katsuragi fall in love with me? Originally it was the opposite and we were the capture targets, so it doesn't make sense that we have to have him fall in love with us…

"… … Hmm?" (Tamaki)

Wait a minute. What's that, this uncomfortable feeling?

… That's right. The love Lily-san speaks of is something we must hold.

And yet we have to make him fall in love with us?

That doesn't add up.

Because we certainly love Katsuragi… as a prerequisite, that already included liking the Katsuragi from our original world.

If she understood that we already liked Katsuragi from our original world, she wouldn't have bothered preparing a trial like this.

… In other words, this is…

"… A meaningless trial…" (Tamaki)

As they left my mouth, they sounded meaningless. Only, the difficulty was fairly high.

"… What is this for?" (Tamaki)

Think, Tamaki Yuina.

It’s a pity, but I can’t expect anything from those two in this. If I don’t break through this test…

Who would gain from such a thing? The answer is Lily-san.

… That’s right. Lily-san, right now, what are you doing? Are you monitoring us?

… No. I don’t think she’s watching.

However, perhaps… This may get me proof.

Stubbornly, I once again tried asking for an explanation.

“… I’m sorry, could I ask for it to be explained again because I don’t understand the meaning at all?” (Tamaki)

『You have to make Hero-sama—Katsuragi Daichi fall in love with you in order to satisfy the conditions. However, confessing from the start will cause a restart. I’m sure you know more about this place than me. Is this your school? I’ve never seen it.』(Lily)

… I knew it. A fixed response was given.

So, at least right now, Lily-san should be doing some other thing.

In that case, there was only one answer I could think of.

She was buying time.

The reason… I think that there are a lot packed together, but I feel like I somewhat understand.

『It’s the duty of a good woman to give her husband what he wishes for.』

If she locked us up separately with a realistic-sounding pretext and managed to go to her husband’s side… No, in that case, Leadred-san would stop her.

“Was her purpose to fight with Leadred-san…?” (Tamaki)

If that were the case she would have fought from the beginning without doing something like this. Lily-san wasn’t the type of person to use this roundabout method.

Then, what meaning was there in this trial?

… Huh? That’s interesting. I came to a contradiction. I confused myself by thinking too much.

Calm down, me. Calm down…

I organized the necessary information out loud.

“The capture conditions are to have Katsuragi fall in love with me. However, why Lily-san wants us to do this, I do not know. And yet she purposely gave us this trial. There must be a reason for this trial.” (Tamaki)

Putting these together… the capture was meaningless… the process must have some meaning… probably.

Yeah, that’s probably it. I’ll just assume that.

“… Anyway, if I didn’t go it would be bad.” (Tamaki)

Those two had probably already started. If I played I could take the lead.

“Start!” (Tamaki)

I threw myself into the light.

◇◆◇◆◇◆◇◆◇◆◇◆◇◆

“… It really is the school…” (Tamaki)

After being covered with light, I was at the Ogino Miya Academy. The desks, blackboard, even the clock, everything was perfectly consistent.

The after-school bell chimed to inform that it was four o’clock, I was sitting on a desk with my arms folded.

Near me were Shuri-chan and Nanami—they were looking down at Katsuragi who had been bullied.

“Uu…” (Tamaki)

Seeing the spectacle caused me to have feelings of guilt. I doubted the way I was.

“Katsuragi~. Because you are on cleaning duty hold the rag firmly!” (Samejima)

Samejima and his gang were bullying Katsuragi. The rag was in Katsuragi’s mouth, and his face was pressed against the floor.

… Why. Why was I remorselessly smiling while watching a scene like this?

Why did I ridicule him, why did I oppress him together with them?

… Ah, aren’t I an idiot?

I promptly tried to save him… I stopped myself. Since it would be dangerous if I moved awkwardly now.

Because this was a story reproduced by our memories.

Katsuragi had already suffered this humiliation.

… However, even with that.

Katsuragi’s smiling face popped into my head. The warmth from his hug.

Could I betray him?

Such a thing disgusted me.

So, I summoned the courage to call out his name.

—Katsuragi.

Story 3-13『First Contact』

Me calling out that name caused them to pause and a silent atmosphere hung over the classroom.

Everyone's line of sight in this confined space were on me. It was 100% in astonishment.

"… Tamaki? What happened?" (Samejima)

"… What is it?" (Tamaki)

I carefully made sure that my voice didn't sound hollow, but was only able to say a few words.

"Calling out this brat's name… that's unusual…" (Samejima)

…Eh? I frantically endured it and leaked out a voice.

I forgot that I had used Katsuragi's name so few times.

I've now been using Katsuragi's name on a daily basis. I had gotten used to the warm sensation from every time I used it.

I want to protect that feeling.

"No, I had forgotten that Katsuragi had been called to the homeroom teacher a little while ago. I was told to bring… him." (Tamaki)

A lie. I made something up.

It's fine. I deceived him. If I can make it out of this place I don't care.

Samjima was silent for a short while before clicking his tongue.

"Just as it was getting interesting… hey! Go!" (Samejima)

"Ugh!?" (Daichi)

He kicked the belly of the fallen Katsuragi and left the classroom with his bag.

Probably because there was no longer a reason to be here. Classmates began to leave in groups.

Because they were spectators for the bullying by Samejima.

"Tama-chan, bye-bye." (Nanami)

"Yui-chan, be careful okay? That guy, there's no telling what he'll do." (Shuri)

"… …" (Tamaki)

It saddened me to hear Shuri-chan's advice.

You're wrong, Shuri-chan.

Katsuragi is gentle and has a strong heart.

He's the person you came to like, he's the one who loves you more than anyone.

"… Yeah, thanks. Bye-bye." (Tamaki)

Shuri-chan and Nanami-chan cheerfully waved their hands and left down the hallway.

Probably to go to Samejima. The Shuri-chan of this time told me that she liked Samejima.

He looked good and had both brains and brawn. He was a friendly guy, Katsuragi excepted… that is what Shuri-chan told me.

However, I knew that was just a disguise… Though it was too late now, I wanted to talk to her.

Fuu… I took a long breath. It became just Katsuragi and me left in the classroom.

He was still groveling on the floor in pain.

Right now, I was one of his main bullies… So I think, when viewing it objectively.

If such a person were to try and say comforting words, what kind of things would Katsuragi feel?

That he was being looked down on? Would he be thankful?

I wasn't sure. Unfortunately I couldn't predict it because I had no experience in it, I couldn't even consider.

I could only deal with the outcome.

"… Alright." (Tamaki)

I tried to encourage myself with a small voice.

Then, here I go.

"… Katsuragi." (Tamaki)

"… … …" (Daichi)

"… … Are you okay?" (Tamaki)

"… … -!?" (Daichi)

Katsuragi didn't believe what he was seeing and opened his eyes wide. However, he instantly started glaring.

"… What are you… did you hit your head?" (Daichi)

"Ah, yeah. Earlier this morning, I woke up after hitting the wall." (Tamaki)

"… What are you talking about?" (Daichi)

"Can't you see that a maiden is trying to cover up her embarrassment?" (Tamaki)

"… And now you are being bossy." (Daichi)

"Ah, sorry. I didn't mean it like that…" (Tamaki)

I attempted to retrieve a towel from my pouch, but noticed that my clothes had changed.

… Well, it would have been comical to be in clothes like that at school.

I was instead wearing the academy assigned skirt and sailor blouse.

Though I didn't have a towel, I brought a handkerchief in my skirt every day.

Taking the light-blue checkered cloth from my pocket, I applied It to where his mouth was bleeding due to it being forcibly rubbed against the floor.

"Are you alright, Katsuragi? Does it hurt?" (Tamaki)

"… …" (Daichi)

"… Katsuragi?" (Tamaki)

Because I expected him to not respond, I called out his name again. With that, Katsuragi came back to reality and brushed my hand away.

"… What are you doing?" (Daichi)

"Treating Katsuragi's injury." (Tamaki)

"That's what I mean! Why are you doing that!?" (Daichi) [TN: I feel that I should note, the raw has all of his lines so far more so as statements than as questions. Ending most lines with '… , omae'.]

That yell clearly held anger. Though, I wasn't going to run away.

"I'm sorry. For everything I've done until now, I apologize. I'm so sorry." (Tamaki)

I took several steps back and bowed.

"–!? What are yo-! Why are you suddenly apologizing!!" (Daichi)

“Because I noticed. The sins that I’ve been committing.” (Tamaki)

“What you are saying… I don’t get it…!” (Daichi)

“That’s fine. You don’t need to forgive me. But, let me treat you. I’ll be worried if that festers.” (Tamaki)

I moved to put the handkerchief that Katsuragi brushed away back to his mouth. However, he took it and wiped the blood off himself.

“… … Tch…” (Daichi)

Katsuragi put the handkerchief into his pocket as it was.

“… Don’t think that I am indebted now.” (Daichi)

“I don’t mind. I had no such intention.” (Tamaki)

“… …” (Daichi)

Katsuragi sent me an apathetic look.

“Hey, you.” (Daichi)

“Tamaki Yuina. Call me what you want.” (Tamaki)

“… Were you serious about feeling bad for what you did to me?” (Daichi)

“Yeah, that’s right. How many times do you want me to apologize until you are satisfied?” (Tamaki)

“Then, let me hit you one time.” (Daichi)

Katsuragi spread his mouth in a smirk and smiled vulgarly. If it was the other one, since his looks are good, I’d end up charmed by the nihilistic smile, but here, due to him being a pudgy blob of fat, it wasn’t handsome in the least. That gap between the two made me unconsciously smile bitterly.

“Are you looking down at me?” (Daichi)

“No. However, I was thinking that you weren’t cool at all.” (Tamaki)

“You were looking down at me after all!” (Daichi)

For a moment I recalled pleasantly talking to him in Rostalgia. The indignant Katsuragi stuck out his fist and entrusted it to his emotions.

So slow.

Compared to Katsuragi's punches from the experience we gained in Rostalgia these punches were very dull. I think that I could pierce it if there were a knife in my hand.

It would also be easy to dodge.

However, evading was no good.

His fist hit my face and made a dull sound. Abandoning all attempts to brace for it, I was struck and my body was vigorously knocked onto a row of desks.

Mild pain ran through my back. My right cheek too… it seemed as though it wasn't cracked though. It just throbbed.

"… … Ah-" (Daichi)

Katsuragi let a single sound escape his mouth.

I wondered if he was regretting it? Or was he feeling pleasure? Perhaps it was the former.

Katsuragi clenched his teeth. I heard the sound of his teeth grinding together.

"Why didn't you avoid it…? If it's you, you could have easily done that." (Daichi)

"Because… Katsuragi said he wanted one hit." (Tamaki)

"… Wouldn't I think you were lying!? Why! Answer me!" (Daichi)

"Because I couldn't convey my feelings to Katsuragi. I truly meant my apology." (Tamaki)

"Even if you suddenly said something like that… I know that you are teasing me!" (Daichi)

… I wonder what kind of emotions are swirling inside of him to shout like that.

Just before this I was treating him like garbage. Even if the attitude of the hateful person who was bullying you did a 180… I wouldn't believe it. I would absolutely suspect there was some underlying reason.

Katsuragi surely thought that as well.

Bewilderment. Suspicion. Hatred. I think those sorts of things were running rampant in him.

I want to rid him of those negative emotions. I want to restore the Katsuragi from before I came to this place.

"… Yeah, that's why I don't mind. Even if you don't for now, I want you to come to believe in me little by little." (Tamaki)

"Annoying! Don't talk to me anymore!" (Daichi)

"I won't stop. I want Katsuragi to enjoy his school life." (Tamaki)

“Enjoy it? My school life? I don’t want to hear that from you! Abusing me to the point of violence… now you want me to have fun?” (Daichi)

He drew close to me and grasped my collar, pulling me into a falling state.

“Don’t fucking joke around!” (Daichi)

“I’m not joking.” (Tamaki)

“Never do something like this again. I want nothing to do with you.” (Daichi)

“Don’t wanna.” (Tamaki)

“I got it. I forgive you. It’s fine with that. Stop talking to me already.” (Daichi)

“That’s not it. I didn’t apologize because I wanted forgiveness. I apologized to you so that we could smile together.” (Tamaki)

“—!! Enough already!!” (Daichi)

Katsuragi grew impatient at the repeated answer, took his hand off of me, pushed me, and picked up his bag to leave in a rush.

“Hang on!” (Tamaki)

“… …” (Daichi)

Katsuragi stopped moving at my statement.

“… Katsuragi. You don’t have to hold it in if it’s painful you know? You can open up to me.” (Tamaki)

“… …” (Daichi)

Without giving any particular response, Katsuragi began moving again and left the classroom.

Checking that I could no longer hear his footsteps, I looked up towards the ceiling.

“… I wonder if the first contact went… reasonably?” (Tamaki)

『Yes, reasonably』 was the impression I got from that. Because right now, I think that Katsuragi was also surely troubled.

I won’t aim too high. Because someday, Katsuragi will definitely understand me.

… Well, the simple analysis is over…

“… Hey, they didn’t put anything away…” (Tamaki)

Looking at the disorganized desks and chairs, I sighed.

I think I should probably fulfill my duties as the committee chairman now.

Story 3-14『Re: School Life』

I finished cleaning the classroom and stopped by the faculty room. It was necessary to crush every dangerous possibility.

In the staff room, I talked about the situation to the homeroom teacher. He listened to what kinds of things Samejima did and I explained why Katsuragi's grades were like that. I successfully got an agreement of cooperation from him to help overcome Katsuragi's situation. The teacher also seemed to be troubled by Samejima because was taking advantage of being the board chairman's grandchild.

Additionally, Katsuragi had also stopped by and heard about it.

… That guy's thoughtful nature hadn't changed after all…

I was genuinely happy about that.

"… Katsuragi, I'll be waiting." (Tamaki)

I got off to a reasonable starting dash and improved my mood on the way back to my dormitory room.

Oginomiya's dormitory has one room per person. Though at times it felt small, it was never inconvenient for day-to-day life.

"… Hmmm." (Tamaki)

I was now sitting in a chair at my desk in the corner of my room stretching.

I opened the notebook on my desk. However, I wasn't paying attention to it.

I was putting aside my studies to think of a strategy to improve my position with Katsuragi. Though it wasn't giving any results…

"… This isn't helping …" (Tamaki)

My adventurer clothes and waist pouch were transferred to this room. The contents were the same as they were.

… Speaking of which, I wonder if I could use magic here?

"Ice Wind" (Tamaki)

I tried to chant, but it appeared there was no effect… So no magic… Though whether it would be useful or not was something else entirely…

It couldn't be helped then…

"… I can't deal with times like this… I need to cool down from the excitement earlier…" (Tamaki)

“Whaaaat are you up to? Yui-chan.” (Shuri)

“Nothing, just trying to figure out what to do now…” (Tamaki)

… … Hm?

My close friend Shuri-chan was peeking at my face from above.

… … Shuri-chan? How!?

“Uwa-!?” (Tamaki)

In my surprise I put my weight against the backrest and fell onto the floor.

“Oww…” (Tamaki)

“A-are you okay? Yui-chan?” (Shuri)

“Ah, y-yeah. Somehow.” (Tamaki)

Shuri-chan worried and lent her hand to me. I grabbed it and stood up.

“Really? Though you hit your head hard…” (Shuri)

“I’m fine, I’m fine. It was only a little painful. Not even a scratch.” (Tamaki)

Besides, it was nothing compared to the damage I took from being used as a shield for Katsuragi.

That guy, because of that one matter in the【Scorching Execution Ground】, I was really used as a shield. How long was I desperately trying to not die…? I took a few hits…

… That idiot…

“… Yui-chan?” (Shuri)

“… Ah, yeah? What is it?” (Tamaki)

“… No, because you suddenly smiled, I was wondering what happened.” (Shuri)

“… … Nothing in particular.” (Tamaki)

I didn’t say it. I didn’t say that I was smiling from remembering a conversation with Katsuragi.

“B-besides that, why did Shuri-chan come to my room? Or rather, how did you open the lock?” (Tamaki)

“Yeah. It was your carelessness, Yui-chan… ah, that’s not it… here!” (Shuri)

Shuri-chan took out the notebook that was hidden behind her back. It was covered with sporadic writing. However, there were some parts left blank.

“… These translated classics… could you teach me?” (Shuri)

She stopped, tilted her head sideways and assumed a begging pose.

If it were Katsuragi, instead of attentively teaching him the classics I’d teach him other things. [TN: ಠ_ಠ …]

“… Haa. It can’t be helped huh, Shuri-chan.” (Tamaki)

I couldn’t refuse my best friend’s request. Since my plans for Katsuragi have started to come to a standstill a change of pace might be good.

… I also wanted to keep talking about it.

“Okay. Alright, come here.” (Tamaki)

“Ya~y! Yui-chan, I love you~!” (Shuri)

I shut the notebook that had strategies for Samejima and took the notebook that had notes on the classics out from the shelf. Shuri-chan was putting together a small table she had bought to use at parties.

I told her that I would teach her. However, in her case that meant she would be firmly requesting explanations until she understood. Therefore, I let her copy from my notebook. It felt like cheating, though I kept that thought to myself.

Shuri-chan immediately said “Thank you!”.

“… Shuri-chan.” (Tamaki)

While she was taking notes from the notebook into hers I poured a little grape juice from the refrigerator into two cups.

“Wha~t is it?” (Shuri)

She took a mouthful of the grape juice.

“… What would you say if I liked Katsuragi?” (Tamaki)

“Bu-!?” (Shuri)

As though it were a scene from a manga, Shuri-chan was holding her mouth—to keep the juice from spewing out.

“… Please, wash off your hand.” (Tamaki)

“I-it’s fine! Because none came out, it’s okay! Though, apart from that!” (Shuri)

She was agitated and clapped her hands.

“Yui-chan! Tomorrow, you are going to the hospital! You did become strange from that shock to your head earlier after all!” (Shuri)

“What are you assuming with that story? Besides, I’m fine from earlier, I’m normal!” (Tamaki)

“Then, you have bad taste!” (Shuri)

“… Wasn’t that a little cruel? He also has some good points…” (Tamaki)

“Like what~?” (Shuri)

“Eh, ah…” (Tamaki)

“… Thought so.” (Shuri)

Shuri-chan started talking comfortingly and hit my back with a *PonPon*.

“Yui-chan… You should stop it with Katsuragi.. Hey, there are a few good people in our class.” (Shuri)

I felt a little annoyed and returned some revenge.

“Like Samejima?” (Tamaki)

“… Why is he no good?” (Shuri)

“Why? He is the most popular in our class.” (Tamaki)

“E-enough! I already know!” (Shuri)

Shuri-chan looked down as her face turned red. Such a reaction was cute, and would usually cause me to hug her tightly… However, it wasn’t the time for that now.

She likes Samejima and not Katsuragi.

I wasn’t happy about that, but… honestly, it made me happy.

I could monopolize Katsuragi here. Without being bothered by Shuri-chan and Hayase-san… there were times that I wanted him to see only me.

Because in reality Shuri-chan likes Katsuragi. I was second. I started to realize how amazing Hayase-san’s real feelings were.

“… Hey, Shuri-chan… You know, I seriously like Katsuragi.” (Tamaki)

“So something was weird today…” (Shuri)

“That’s not it… I realized them. His merits and charm…” (Tamaki)

Katsuragi accepted me, one of the people that bullied him. As someone that he was willing to die for. Somehow or another I was selfishly hanging out with Katsuragi.

Together, together with him.

And, Katsuragi must be asleep in a place like this as well.

… That’s right. This Katsuragi should be the same as the real Katsuragi. I had an idea.

“I know that it’s ridiculous for me to say that after injuring him just recently.” (Tamaki)

“… No. Yui-chan isn’t ridiculous. Because, someday… sooner or later we too may be targets in the future. It can’t be helped.” (Shuri)

“Thank you. However, there’s no way that I’d give up. I don’t mind what you do with Samejima. Alright? There’s something that I want to do.” (Tamaki)

“Something you want to do?” (Shuri)

“Yeah. Therefore, I think I should also tell Shuri-chan.

I started to tell her my plan. In order to help Katsuragi and to not involve her, it was necessary.

Shuri-chan noticed my serious atmosphere and became serious herself. She wasn’t the usual adorable mascot.

“First of all, I—“ (Tamaki)

While improving the feelings of my best friend, I talked about what I would do.

◇◆◇◆◇◆◇◆◇◆◇◆◇◆

“Good morning, Katsuragi!” (Tamaki)

『!?』(Everyone Else)

A major earthquake ran through the class. In one go the noisy clattering quickly became silent.

Although I felt the gaze of everyone inside of the class, this was expected. I sat in the seat next to Katsuragi.

“… Why are you so quiet. I’ll be embarrassed if my greetings aren’t returned.” (Tamaki)

“… …Ah, sorry…” (Daichi)

Katsuragi was astonished and started apologizing, but stopped in the middle.

“… You. Didn’t you listen to yesterday’s talk?” (Daichi)

“I have the habit of forgetting inconvenient things after a day.” (Tamaki)

“Are you kidding me?” (Daichi)

“Uh-oh, it’s nonsense to shout here. Could you calm down?” (Tamaki)

“… … Tch.” (Daichi)

Unlike from when I talked to Katsuragi after school yesterday, he stopped with a click of his tongue when he remembered there were a lot of classmates present.

Yeah, so far so good.

Second period.

“Katsuragi!” (Tamaki)

Third period.

“Katsuragi~“ (Tamaki)

Lunch break.

“Katsuragi~. Eat with me~” (Tamaki)

Every period, I approached Katsuragi. Though I was depressingly ignored every time, I continued to charge without reading the situation.

It was lunch break now. I took Katsuragi’s hand without waiting for him to reply.

“Wai-, yo-…uo!?” (Daichi)

I took him with my hands that had been enhanced by my Physical stat and he was unable to put up a resistance.

Although Katsuragi was trying not to slip, I continued forward.

Though my destination was normally prohibited for students, I kept the key from the homeroom teacher yesterday. Turning the key that fit precisely in the keyhole, I opened the door and the blue sky came into sight.

The rooftop. A world with only Katsuragi and me. Our life would start here.

“Katsuragi.” (Tamaki)

“What is it? My hand, hand, let go.” (Daichi)

“Don’t wanna.” (Tamaki)

In addition, I squeezed my hands. The sensation of Katsuragi’s cold hand felt good.

“—Let’s defeat Samejima.” (Tamaki)

“Ah?” (Daichi)

Katsuragi looked up in reaction to the sudden words that he didn’t understand.

I understood his endurance.

His eyes, like when he killed me and when he heard about Samejima in Russell’s guild, were viciously smiling.

Though he didn’t answer, I understood.

“We’ll start fresh today. From here, our school life will begin again.” (Tamaki)

After all, Katsuragi—is Katsuragi.

Story 3-15『Resignation』

I will make Katsuragi fall in love with me. For that reason, I have no choice but to first obtain Katsuragi's trust. For that, I thought that the best thing was probably to recognize Samejima as an enemy together.

Therefore, I suggested it. If it's Katsuragi he'd definitely agree to it.

Although he would hate me at first, I won't mind even if he abused me. The process was important.

"… Oi, Tamaki." (Daichi)

"What?" (Tamaki)

"Though you talked about defeating Samejima… can something like that really be done?" (Daichi)

He bit!

My prediction came true. Katsuragi still wanted to defeat Samejima in his heart.

"It is possible. If Katsuragi perseveres it will be enough." (Tamaki)

"Me… persevere?" (Daichi)

I nodded.

"Eye for an eye, tooth for a tooth. Force for force." (Tamaki)

"… Challenge him to a fight?" (Daichi)

"Yeah. You'd win against Samejima in a one-on-one match. He would be looking down on Katsuragi." (Tamaki)

"Hey, are you being serious here…?" (Daichi)

"I'm serious." (Tamaki)

I returned Katsuragi's stare. Our stares met for a while, before Katsuragi looked away.

"… I understand. Let's assume that I can defeat Samejima. How would you benefit?" (Daichi)

"I've said it many times. I want to spend school life together with Katsuragi." (Tamaki)

"It's difficult to believe what you're saying." (Daichi)

"I know." (Tamaki)

I wrapped my hands around Katsuragi's hand. I didn't let go. I faced him.

"However, it would be nice to start from zero." (Tamaki)

"… How?" (Daichi)

"I don't know." (Tamaki)

"Huh?" (Daichi)

"I mean, isn't that right? I don't know how I could earn Katsuragi's trust. So, please tell me. About Katsuragi. Lots, lots, I want to know about you." (Tamaki)

Katsuragi's dark eyes were moving about in confusion. I wondered if my words reached his heart. I wasn't flustered, but I was taking into consideration the atmosphere.

"… … Understood." (Daichi)

He said the word I was waiting for. I naturally smiled.

"Then, I will-!" (Tamaki)

—also work hard in order to defeat Samejima together, is what I was trying to say.

"Are you misunderstanding?" (Daichi)

"… … Eh?" (Tamaki)

"Though I understand what you're saying I don't think it is worth going through with your plan." (Daichi)

Katsuragi shook off my hand that had lost its strength like an annoying bug.

"… Where was it no good?" (Tamaki)

I found that my voice was trembling. However, my feelings were limited by being dammed down to a muddy stream.

"I certainly hate Samejima. So extremely that I want to kill him." (Daichi)

"If that's the case-" (Tamaki)

"However." (Daichi)

He gazed towards the heavens, and for a moment his eyes looked sad and distant.

"It's unreasonable. I'm trash. I have no choice but to accept it, it's reality!" (Daichi)

"… …" (Tamaki)

It was painful. Very painful, Katsuragi calling himself trash. I clenched my fists, fingernails digging in.

However, that was because Samejima's acts, somehow or other, had made him accept that claim.

"How much effort did you think I used? How much trial and error do you think it took? You! What do you know!?" (Daichi)

Stop it. It hurts. I don't want to hear anymore. Please don't say it.

… However, I didn't stop.

"… Giving up won't do." (Tamaki)

"It's not possible! I can't win! No matter how much I struggle!!" (Daichi)

Katsuragi spat it out, his breathing became rough and his shoulders rising up and down.

"… And I can't trust you. What's with that? Suddenly waking up to a sense of justice…" (Daichi)

"T-that's-" (Tamaki)

"Just… leave me alone already…" (Daichi)

After exhausting his words, he looked like a soldier who had finally been released from service.

If I continued like this any further it would wound him. Of course, I understood that the future held joy for him.

My chest tightened.

… … I hardened my resolve. I reminded myself that this was not the real Katsuragi. This was only an illusion that Lily created.

The real Katsuragi wasn't having to taste this suffering.

"… I don't want… to give up. I recognize that Katsuragi has worth as a human being, and until Samejima is defeated… I won't give up." (Tamaki)

"… … Do whatever you like." (Daichi)

Katsuragi sighed half in amazement and started to get off of the roof.

I had to tell him something immediately.

"I will be waiting here. During lunch breaks and after school. I believe that Katsuragi will come." (Tamaki)

“… So persistent.” (Daichi)

Katsuragi left the roof.

When I heard the sound of the door closing, I sat down on the floor as though I had no waist.

… It can’t be helped, can it? That I could only do that much is a fact. Having come to this, I can’t complain.

I was able to learn a little more of Katsuragi’s feelings. I understood it again.

The fact that I didn’t know anything about Katsuragi.

I had to advance before being depressed.

What I can do is to believe in Katsuragi. Unless I believed in him from the bottom of my heart, there’s no way he would open up to me.

I had to stick to my word, to show that he wouldn’t be abandoned. Katsuragi will come here sooner or later.

… From now on I’ll be eating lunch on the rooftop, huh…

“… What do I do about this?” (Tamaki)

I still had two lunchboxes. It would be wasteful to throw them away, so do I eat them?

I leaned against the door so that no one could come out onto the roof.

… Is it okay now?

Today’s lunch was a little salty.

◇◆◇◆◇◆◇◆◇◆◇◆◇◆

About two hours have passed since I went through the transfer magic formation on the 30th Floor I think?

It wasn’t possible to know the time because I didn’t have a clock, and was guessing by how fatigued I felt.

“Damn… those tenacious guys from a bit ago.” (Daichi)

I descended six floors since then to the temporary provisional 37th Floor and had spent the past thirty minutes on this floor alone.

It was due to the Iron Rabbits I’ve been fighting.

The rabbit could temporarily cause its body to become metal, and would be in groups of no less than three.

In other words, every encounter against them was many-on-one. Additionally, their bodies heated up because of the hot temperature.

Getting hit would become a considerable wound. They were small and quick.

“Kyui!!” (Iron Rabbit #1)

The head of Iron Rabbit #1 who was in front of the others had a shining luster and it flew towards my abdomen. Being in such a low floor they had satisfactory speed and a high physical strength too.

However, I’ve already fought them many times. To some extent, I’ve memorized their patterns. Seeing their white afterimages in both sides of my vision, I sidestepped the decoys.

“Ra-!” (Daichi)

I leapt, changing my posture so that my back was skimming the ceiling. With both rabbits’ heads approaching from the left and right, I put my hands out in front of me and fired Wind at them.

“Kyu!?” (Iron Rabbit #1)

“Kyuki!” (Iron Rabbit #2)

Both rabbits fell down from the sudden gust, there was no way I’d overlook it. I took the dagger out of its case and threw it at the Iron Rabbit on the left, while I slashed at the Iron Rabbit on the right. [TN: Double-edged military dagger.]

“This is your end!!” (Daichi)

I turned around in order to strike Iron Rabbit #1, who was trying to rocket head butt me from behind, with my sword.

An earsplitting metallic sound rang out. Because the Iron Rabbit took the vibrations directly to its brain, its movements became slow.

I seized its neck and put all of my strength in the grip to break it.

Three light particles ascended towards the sky when it died.

After confirming its death I wiped the sweat that had gathered on my brow with my arm.

“It’s hot!!” (Daichi)

I immediately redeployed the Ice Wind that had been stopped during it because I became too focused on the battle.

I-I thought I’d die…

I'd really hate to be dissolved and absorbed by this dungeon like slime. If I died I wouldn't be able to touch Shuri's body.

… Oi, no, wait up. I won't die. Thanks to the power that goddess gave me.

… I was becoming very tired…

"Capturing a dungeon without taking a break is intense…" (Daichi)

Just in case some monster appeared, to be able to deal with them I sat in the middle of the pathway, sword in hand.

As expected, I felt the value of companions at times like this… back then, I didn't try to rely on anyone. Since everyone around me were enemies.

Thinking about it, I've come far from back then by continually going through some unbelievable days.

Living with and liking a girl, depending on the idiot committee chairman, and laughing with a demon. Most recently a book girl started giving me her affection.

"… …" (Daichi)

My eyes were closed and I was recalling many things.

They were all indispensable. I want to protect them.

Those feelings stirred me.

"… I've got to quickly reach the bottom layer, to meet up with everyone." (Daichi)

Standing up, I did some light stretched and started walking to the door of the room that was connected to the next floor.

Story 3-16『Failure』

“Where am-…!?” (Shuri)

When I opened my eyes, there was certainly Oginomiya Academy’s classroom that we strove to study in.

My sight hurriedly darted around. Then, an unpleasant scene entered my sight.

“Katsuragi~.You are on cleaning duty so you have to hold the rag firmly!” (Samejima)

Samejima was bullying Kasturagi-kun. His face was gripped and being rubbed against the floor.

… What are these people doing?

Stop it.

My shoulders quivered as rage flared up in my core.

“Did something happen? Shuri-chan?” (Nanami)

Next to me, Nanami-chan was worried and asked. She also wore a pained expression, looking away. My other friend, Yui-chan, was in contrast viewing the scene happily.

This was insanity. That’s what I thought.

I have to help. I must help him. Because nobody other but me understands him.

Save Katsuragi-kun from that group of garbage.

I ran over to Katsuragi-kun when I could no longer stand it. After pushing the hindrances, Samejima’s group, out of the way, I took the rag out of his mouth.

“Npu-!” (Samejima)

Samejima was unable to avoid me pushing him off balance and was beautifully hit in the face.

Serves him right.

“… Oi, Hamakazi. What are you doing?” (Samejima)

Samejima asked with a vein appearing on his forehead.

I boldly smiled while standing before Katsuragi-kun to protect him.

“I thought I would give you a taste of what Katsuragi-kun is feeling.” (Shuri)

“You… are you fucking joking?” (Samejima)

“You heard what I said. Why would I ignore something like this?” (Shuri)

“Because that guy is garbage. Do you understand? No one in the world wants defective merchandise. No one will be sad even if I break him.” (Samejima)

“Yeah. Shouldn’t Hamakaze get away from him?” (—)

“Or rather, did you seriously… Perhaps, did you come to like Katsuragi?” (—)

The classroom was filled with laughter and spite.

I gritted my teeth and held my temper.

What are these guys? So annoying.

Even though you don’t know about Katsuragi-kun at all. How could you say such a thing?

… … I can’t forgive them.

“… Shut up.” (Shuri)

“Ahn?” (Samejima)

“I told you to shut up, sleazebag. I will not show mercy to anyone who speaks badly about Katsuragi-kun.” (Shuri)

I glared at the cocky guy in front of me.

I warned him. Any more and he would forfeit his life.

However, that trash looks like he didn’t understand.

“… Hamakaze. Didn’t you also bully that guy with us before? So you had that kind of hobby huh? Did I guess right?” (Samejima)

Samejima laughed at me in derision. Everyone in the classroom sneered at me in agreement.

This fellow is really noisy.

Therefore, I shut him up.

“Aga-…?” (Samejima)

In an instant, I drew close to his chest and performed an uppercut on him. Mercilessly using power that far exceeded an ordinary person’s, his upper body flew up and top of his head struck the ceiling from the blow to his head. There was a *Gusha!!* sound.

“… S-Samejima?” (Umahara)

Umahara called out to Samejima but there was no reply. Only blood came out.

“U-uwaaaaaaaa!?” (—)

Someone screamed.

Why would I care?

I grabbed the heads of people near me and slammed them into desks.

Over and over again.

After making sure that their arms hung limp and powerless, I threw them towards the bunch who didn’t want to dirty their own hands and just arrogantly immerse themselves in watching someone weaker.

“… Who’s next?” (Shuri)

An easily understood blood thirst emanated from my entire body. Those words triggered my classmates to scramble to leave the classroom.

Once danger reached your body, you would eventually value your life more than another’s. Confirming it with a sidelong glance, Yui-chan was included in that as well.

She didn’t know.

After all, this world was one Lily created, a fake world based on our memories.

The real Yui-chan would have gladly cooperated with me.

… Leaving that aside.

I turned around and approached Katsuragi-kun who was lying on the floor. His mouth was opening and closing. He was probably surprised at what he just saw.

Even so it couldn’t be helped. Since this version of him had never seen a person die.

“There’s no need to be disappointed, Katsuragi-kun.” (Shuri)

I embraced Katsuragi-kun.

My dear, dear Katsuragi-kun.

“Eh-… ah-…” (Daichi)

He was unable to articulate his words.

He body was trembling little by little. Katsuragi-kun is the gentle person who forgave Yui-chan and I. Perhaps, he felt some guilt in the corner of his heart.

Then, I had to ease his anxiety.

Though it was a little embarrassing I buried Katsuragi-kun's face in my chest like a mother embracing her child.

"Be relieved, Katsuragi-kun. No one will hurt you anymore. I will protect Katsuragi-kun if anything happens." (Shuri)

Firmly, firmly I held him. For a long, long time.

However, on the contrary Katsuragi-kun pushed me away.

"Eh?" (Shuri)

I fell down from the unexpected impact. Katsuragi-kun's raised his face and extended his arms.

His face was filled with fear. Contempt was mixed into his gaze.

… Why?

"Y-you… what did you…" (Daichi)

"I was rescuing Katsuragi-kun?" (Shuri)

"Not that! You murdered him!!" (Daichi)

Murder. Ah, right.

I definitely killed someone.

… However.

"What about it?" (Shuri)

"!?" (Daichi)

"I mean, I think what these guys constantly did to Katsuragi-kun was much more painful." (Shuri)

"Y-you, what are you saying…" (Daichi)

"I said that it was alright that they died. Because it was compensation for the crimes they've committed until now." (Shuri)

I walked up to Katsuragi-kun with open arms.

"I like you, Katsuragi-kun. I love you." (Shuri)

I told him my feelings. Knowing this, Katsuragi-kun would accept me.

I thought that.

However, he threw back a cruel remark.

“Stay away!! You monster!! You’re disgusting!” (Daichi)

Katsuragi-kun was frightened from when I killed Samejima and the other classmates, his face was distorted.

Collapsing in tears, he retreated every time I took a step.

“W-what’s wrong, Katsuragi-kun? I am yours.” (Shuri)

“Stay away!” (Daichi)

Complete rejection.

… Why?

I like Katsuragi-kun so much. I would do anything for Katsuragi-kun.

I erased Samejima’s group that Katsuragi-kun cursed and wanted revenge on. I stopped the other classmates as well. I told you what I honestly thought.

“Katsuragi…kun…” (Shuri)

“Stop it! Shuri-chan!” (Nanami)

“Kya-“ (Shuri)

Still, someone approaching me from the side and pushing me away was totally unexpected.

I thought that Nanami had surely left with the others.

“Nana…mi?” (Shuri)

“Katsuragi-kun! Come here!” (Nanami)

“… A-aah!” (Daichi)

Pulling Katsuragi-kun’s hand, Nanami hurried out of the room.

Katsuragi-kun’s retreating figure went with her.

Ah… don’t go, Katsuragi-kun.

Why… why…?

I then suddenly lost consciousness.

◇◆◇◆◇◆◇◆◇◆◇◆◇◆

"… I'm back here…?" (Shuri)

When I came to, I was in front of the image from before.

The school building was a flat plane rather than three-dimensional. Looking around there were only black walls.

After all, I came back to this place…

『I forced the Game Over. I don't think your favorable impression would rise from there… I wonder if you are unexpectedly an idiot?』(Lily)

Lily's voice came just as I was thinking about that. Her words pierced through my chest like an arrow.

『Going to the extent of suddenly killing someone mercilessly in front of Hero-sama huh. Hero-sama wasn't used to seeing things die before coming here you know? … And yet you chose to do just that… I have nothing to call you but an idiot.』(Lily)

"U-… B-but, I was helping Katsuragi-kun!" (Shuri)

『He wouldn't come to the conclusion that the young lady who just murdered the person who was bullying him liked him just because you embraced him and told him how you felt!! Don't you understand!?』(Lily)

Lily's point was reasonable. Now that I had calmed down, I was also regretting my actions.

Yeah. The Katsuragi-kun from here doesn't know my feelings, but that doesn't mean we won't come to like me.

And yet I selfishly explained it at my own convenience.

… I may have rushed it a bit.

What now?

It's decided. I'll be like Yui-chan, then.

She's my best friend. Therefore, I believe I know all about her good points.

If I approach him being cute and friendly like Yui-chan, maybe I'll sway Katsuragi-kun's feelings. Although he himself says otherwise, I can't help but worry about that.

『From just that? You had a Game Over at the start.』(Lily)

"… And the other two? Do they start in the same situation?" (Shuri)

『Everyone has to go through their own process. That Shield is particularly skilled though. She is probably the best fit for the position.』(Lily)

“I-is that so…” (Shuri)

『… … Well, calm down and quickly try the challenge the second time. If you don’t, those two will snatch Hero-sama away from you.』(Lily)

Hearing Lily say that, I imagined the scene. Talking and smiling with Yui-chan and Hayase-san in his arms… while my head hung down behind them.

… I don’t want an unpleasant future like that.

“… I got it. I’ll go immediately.” (Shuri)

『That’s the spirit.』(Lily)

Lily was cajoling me, but what she said was true.

I couldn’t afford to nonchalantly be defeated here.

“… This time I will definitely…!” (Shuri)

Why slapping my cheeks to fire myself up, I jumped into the image.

Story 3-17 『Making A Mistake, Apologizing, Starting』

“Yeah, it’s good… isn’t it.” (Tamaki)

I murmured my thoughts on the lunch I made while closing the lid of the lunchbox. I laid it on top of the other lunchbox that was once again left unopened.

Two weeks had already passed since that day.

I was disregarded by him in the classroom even if I talked to him since the first week. Nevertheless, he immediately left the classroom once lunch break started since the start of the week, coming back just before it ended. After school Katsuragi’s time was stolen by Samejima.

Due to that, there hasn’t been any development with him.

As I didn’t even interact with him anymore, it seems that our classmates took it all as a temporary delusion. They took it as me fulfilling my role as committee chairman.

Therefore, nothing in particular happened.

Katsuragi was still bullied daily. I feigned friendliness and played the honor student every day.

As it was now, nothing had changed.

Thinking about it was troublesome so he gave up and『Resigned』. He consented, and accepted the status quo as it was.

It was difficult to sway the hearts of those who had『Resigned』. So, I could do nothing but slowly make progress by waiting for him on the rooftop during lunch breaks and after school.

I looked at my wristwatch, it was five minutes until the start of fifth period’s class. I would be late if I don’t return soon.

“Because he didn’t come today as well… another X.” (Tamaki)

I took a small notebook out of my pocket and put filled the column for today’s date.

This is the Katsuragi observation diary that I’ve had since that day.

I was once again reminded that I did not know anything about Katsuragi since coming to this world.

Though I thought about doing it because I was near him, above all I just wanted to know more about him.

Shuri-chan already seemed to know. She’d been with him longer than me. So, Shuri-chan had an advantage.

I had to make an effort to make up the difference.

"… I wonder what Katsuragi is doing…" (Tamaki)

I can't see a way out.

Being in such a state, I sighed in disappointment at my inability to break down my worthlessness.

◇◆◇◆◇◆◇◆◇◆◇◆◇◆

December 8 XX

Katsuragi didn't eat his lunch box today. There was definitely always a meal for him. I think Samejima stamped on everything. Sure enough, it was thrown into the trash. However, after Samejima was satisfied and left him, he took out some spare bread. He laughed in spite of himself.

December 9 XX

December 10 XX

December 12 XX

December 17 XX

Samejima's bullying was even more terrible today. However, I didn't stop him. Saying that, I wasn't able to stop him. I was irritated. I wonder if there's something I can do?

December 20 XX

Recently, I've felt tired. My body is sluggish. When I measured my temperature I had a low-grade fever. I thought it was safe if it was just this much and though I went to school, I hit my limit just before lunch break. I fell over because of that. I had to break my promise to Katsuragi for the first time. Now, I don't know what I should do anymore.

December 21 XX

I went to school after my temperature recovered and there was a loose-leafed notebook filled with information from yesterday's lesson on top of my clean desk… I wonder if it was Nanami? I asked and it seemed that's how it was, though I have to say… I wonder if she was agitated. Anyways, she has my gratitude. Katsuragi also didn't come to the roof today.

December 22 —X

◇◆◇◆◇◆◇◆◇◆◇◆◇◆

"… It's no good…" (Tamaki)

Flipping through the pages, I closed the notebook and put an X through today's date.

Another month.

I wondered how much time passed in the real world. I don't mean that I think that an entire month has passed… but Katsuragi may encounter Samejima and fight him by himself.

That's no good. It's too dangerous.

I have to clear this and go to him soon…

… But, I wonder if I can do it…

"Yui-chan!" (—)

"… Eh-, ah, yes!" (Tamaki)

My consciousness returned with my name being unexpectedly called.

The perpetrator was Nanami, who had called out anxiously.

"Are you alright, Yui-chan? You didn't answer after I called you many times…" (Nanami)

"Y-yeah. Sorry. I was in a bit of a daze." (Tamaki)

"Is it from the fever? It's been so cold out every day. Your temperature just returned to normal too." (Nanami)

"No, it's not like that. It's alright, I'm fine." (Tamaki)

"If so that's good…" (Nanami)

"Other than that, Nanami. Did you have anything to talk to me about?" (Tamaki)

"Ah, yeah. There will be a gathering of the committee chairman from each class after school today for a conference. The location is the multipurpose room on the third floor so I came early to tell you." (Nanami)

"Got it. Thanks for the message." (Tamaki)

"Yui-chan, where are you going?" (Nanami)

"The staff room?" (Tamaki)

"But, the teacher is coming, and class will start…" (Nanami)

"It's fine, it's fine. It's homeroom class, after all. And the one I have business with is our homeroom teacher." (Tamaki)

"… What business?" (Nanami)

“Though I had asked Shuri-chan to openly hear me out… I want to reduce the burden on her a bit… I guess.” (Tamaki)

I had talked with Shuri-chan about my feelings concerning Katsuragi before.

After that, she’s been having a good time hanging out with Samejima after school before returning to the dormitory. Shuri-chan said it was killing two birds with one stone.

Though I advised her to stop it with Samejima, she refuted saying that she wouldn’t recognize Katsuragi either.

Because of that, the amount of after school bullying has decreased to once per week.

So I was thinking about changing the meetings to be held in this classroom. That way Samejima would be forced to leave the classroom.

“Well, I’ll be off then.” (Tamaki)

I said so and left the classroom.

At that time, Nanami’s eyes gaze shifted to Katsuragi as she seemed to decide something.

◇◆◇◆◇◆◇◆◇◆◇◆◇

“Then the meeting is adjourned. Bow.” (—)

『Thank you very much.』(All)

The committee said their farewell and broke up. The contents of the agenda was Oginomiya Academy’s school event. Each class would hold a play to make their last memories of the school year. It would be before spring break began. The best works would be used as PR videos for freshmen.

Therefore, screenplays will be submitted one week from now. The sets must be finished within two months, a fast pace. Though it was sandwiched by winter break, it was a well-known fact that it wasn’t enough time. It puts a lot of responsibility on the committee chairmen, thinking about it was depressing.

“Haa…” (Tamaki)

I put the documents away into my bag—and incidentally, I noticed that one lunch box was missing.

“Did I leave it on the rooftop…?” (Tamaki)

That fact further exacerbated my mood. Recently, opening the rooftop door was troubling.

It was scary.

Katsuragi wouldn’t be there. However, the empty world spread out.

I wanted to『Give Up』. [TN: Same kanji used earlier for Katsuragi's "Resigned"]

However, I would not cross that line.

Fear was born during that interval.

"… It's no use hesitating!" (Tamaki)

I turned the doorknob.

The door was less than two meters tall but had a presence many times larger… though that was impossible.

"… I will believe in you." (Tamaki)

Gachari. An inorganic sound rang as the door opened.

My eyelids that were shut on reflex slowly opened.

Looking at the place where I always sat eating, there was a visitor.

"Katsu…ragi…" (Tamaki)

It was really Katsuragi.

Muffler wrapped around his neck, he let out a white breath, and was rubbing his hands together to warm them from the friction.

"… Ah, you finally came." (Daichi)

Having noticed me, Katsuragi wrapped the lunchbox and carried it lying flat on its side and walked over to me.

Eh? Eh?

"K-Katsuragi. Why?" (Tamaki)

"Why you ask… that's…" (Daichi)

Katsuragi was embarrassed and scratched his cheek. He wouldn't look at me.

"It's… how should I put it… I was acting like a child… I was at fault. That time, I yelled at you." (Daichi)

"Ah, n-no. I was insensitive." (Tamaki)

"That's not it. At that time, I… you were accurate… I was frustrated. Because of that I vented my anger at you… I'm very sorry." (Daichi)

"N-no, I don't particularly mind." (Tamaki)

“Still, I want to apologize. And I have another favor to ask.” (Daichi)

Katsuragi bowed. He conveyed how serious he was in one go.

“I want to defeat him. However, I know that I have no strength. I’ll make an effort. I’ll do anything. Nothing could be more painful than right now! So, please help me! Please!” (Daichi)

… Eh? Eh? Eh?

W-what should I do?

For my part, I wasn’t worried at all. Or should I say, I wouldn’t do something like ask what caused him to change.

It was nice to be relied on by Katsuragi, I didn’t know that I had such a desire.

He said something like that because he trusted me… ah, what to do?

It felt like crying.

“Ka-Katsuragi!” (Tamaki)

“W-what?” (Daichi)

“I’ve always waited here for Katsuragi!” (Tamaki)

“That was really my bad. I was stubborn… sorry.” (Daichi)

“Day after day, it was amazingly cold!” (Tamaki)

“Oh, was it?” (Daichi)

“Therefore!” (Tamaki)

I suddenly extended both of my hands, and asked him while putting on as calm of an expression as I could.

“… Therefore… because of that, right now, would you warm me up…?” (Tamaki)

My face was hot. It was definitely bright red. I was embarrassed so I didn’t want him to see me.

“L-let me see… is this okay?” (Daichi)

“… Yeah. Hurry up, it’s cold.” (Tamaki)

“O-oh…” (Daichi)

Katsuragi timidly stretched out one of his arm and wrapped it around my waist. I leaned on him.

Warm. I was relieved. I wanted to stay like this.

“T-Tamaki?” (Daichi)

… He called me by name for the first time. I couldn’t stop smiling.

“A-are you alright?” (Daichi)

“Why are you worried?” (Tamaki)

“It’s… the first time I’ve done something like this… saying those things, it’s embarrassing.” (Daichi)

“… I’m happy. With that, I’m Katsuragi’s first.” (Tamaki)

“… Tamaki. You should absolutely never say that to a man you know? Because most will become a wolf.” (Daichi)

“Though I don’t understand well… got it.” (Tamaki)

I wonder why Katsuragi said to knock it off. Next time I’ll be careful.

“… By the way, Tamaki. Isn’t this enough?” (Daichi)

“… … … Not a chance.” (Tamaki)

“… Is that so? … Let me know when you are satisfied so we can continue.” (Daichi)

“O~kay…” (Tamaki)

I squeezed him with my arms tighter.

After ten minutes passed, I was finally satisfied and we separated.

Story 3-18『Lunch』

Katsuragi and I sat side by side on the rooftop. Though it would have been good to return to the dormitory, it would have been troublesome if someone saw us.

It still wasn't desirable.

"… Come to think of it, why did Katsuragi suddenly come to me? I also think hearing it was strange." (Tamaki)

"… Well, I was definitely anxious about it… Well, today, when Tamaki attended the committee you called Samejima away… That showed me how hard Tamaki's been trying. Because of… what's wrong?" (Daichi)

"Ah, no, I-I wasn't particularly trying hard… go on, because of what?" (Tamaki)
"O-oh. I was scolded. I was called a coward." (Daichi)

"E-eh…" (Tamaki)

The unexpected words were surprising.

A coward… I can't imagine Nanami saying something like that.

I mean, doing that while I wasn't there…

However, I'm genuinely grateful for my close friend's help. Next time, I have to treat her to something.

"I had second thoughts, and changed my mind about coming here… In the end, I had nothing. Without moving forward, giving up, and carrying on as usual is something only cowards do… When I was wondering what I should do… Tamaki's face came to mind… I'm an idiot, finally noticing it." (Daichi)

"… Is that so, is that so." (Tamaki)

I was attentively watching his childish monologue with a warm gaze. Katsuragi's face grew a little sullen.

"… You look a little glad, Tamaki. Even though talking about this is embarrassing to me…" (Daichi)

"Well, after all I'm the first one that came to mind you know? Because Katsuragi kept me in mind… it's normal to be this happy." (Tamaki)

Since Katsuragi also exposed how he felt, I also confessed my true feelings.

Then, Katsuragi was taken aback and looked away from me.

"What's wrong? Was it surprising for me to say something like that?" (Tamaki)

“N-no, that’s not it… Well, it’s fine. That lunchbox. I heard from Sajima… you’ve been making it for me?” (Daichi)

“Yeah. Because Katsuragi only ever has bread, it’s bad for your health if you don’t occasionally eat nutritious food.” (Tamaki)

“Thank you very much for paying attention to that extent. It was really delicious.” (Daichi)

“That’s good then. It was worth making them.” (Tamaki)

“I wonder if I should say you’re welcome at a time like this.” (Daichi)

“Well, I wonder.” (Tamaki)

“… …” (Daichi)

“…” (Tamaki)

『… …』(Both)

After laughing a bit, silence filled the air.

… Unable to continue the conversation I said something strange.

W-what do I do? I never spoke to the Katsuragi of this time in the first place…

Anyway, it will be awkward if I don’t say something!

“K-Katsuragi.” (Tamaki)

“What?” (Daichi)

“It’s… Katsuragi wants to defeat Samejima right?” (Tamaki)

“Yeah, that’s right. I don’t want to lose. I don’t want to give in. I’ll do anything to defeat him.” (Daichi)

Katsuragi’s determination seemed to harden considerably. Well, it’s easy for me.

With his motivated gaze, my switch was flipped. Otherwise it would have been impolite to him.

“… Got it. We’ll start immediately tomorrow then.” (Tamaki)

There are no classes tomorrow from the closing ceremony until morning and many of the students return to the dormitory.

Fortunately the day after tomorrow is also the start of winter break so students generally attend as they please. That said, I need to finish up the proposal and submit it.

That aside, other students return to their parents' home at this time.

Naturally, that includes Samejima.

These two weeks will be a contest. How much foundation can we prepare?

"… Alright, I've decided! Special training starts tomorrow! Come here after school!" (Tamaki)

Katsuragi vigorously stood up with a snap when I pointed at him. He smiled wryly and nodded.

"Got it… all good then?" (Daichi)

Katsuragi held out his hand. I returned the gesture and gripped his hand.

"Yeah, all good." (Tamaki)

And thus our Anti-Samejima Alliance was formed.

◇◆◇◆◇◆◇◆◇◆◇◆◇◆

Today is a clear day in the middle of winter break.

It wouldn't be an exaggeration to say that the rooftop we're on is our base. It is a very convenient place because, excluding me who has the key, you cannot freely come and go from here.

In other words, we won't be found out no matter what we do.

"Uooo!" (Daichi)

Bathed in the light of day, Katsuragi was glistening in sweat from his usual constant practice.

The contents were simple, I would wrap a rope around my arm and Katsuragi would pull on it. That's it.

However, I am throwing Katsuragi with a one-armed shoulder throw. Instead of using my arm like normal, I was using a rope.

"Redeem yourself, Katsuragi. I haven't moved an inch!" (Tamaki)

"Ku… raaah!" (Daichi)

The rope that was loosening straightened. Evidence that he was putting all of his strength into it.

… I still didn't move though.

The purpose of this exercise was to build up his strength.

To be able to move me, that is, you would have to exceed my physical status.

Though it was difficult, there was another reason for this. If Katsuragi found himself in a contest of strength, he would first of all need to become accustomed to facing an overwhelming strength and gain self-confidence.

Still, some people would think that a man losing to the power of a woman is embarrassing…

"… Damnit…!" (Daichi)

Katsuragi had a personality that that applied to. With this the chance of him stopping lowered.

"Ten minutes left until we rest so give it your all!" (Tamaki)

"Yeah…!" (Daichi)

Katsuragi pulled the rope with all of his body weight.

Of course, I didn't move at all.

"Alright. That's enough for today. Here's a drink and towel." (Tamaki)

"T-thank you…" (Daichi)

Katsuragi laid down face up and put the towel on his face, with the bottle sideways to cool down.

Sitting down next to him, Katsuragi sat up.

"… Haa… to not move at all… What kind of muscles do you have?" (Daichi)

"Want to feel?" (Tamaki)

I flexed and produced a small, well-developed bicep. Katsuragi poked it with his finger, his mouth opened with doubt.

"… Really, where are all of your muscles?" (Daichi)

"Maiden's secret." (Tamaki)

I placed my index finger on my mouth, smiling mischievously to tease him.

"… That's cheating." (Daichi)

"Hmm? Did you say something?" (Tamaki)

"Nope, nothing." (Daichi)

Katsuragi didn't want to pursue the topic and interrupted the conversation by drinking his sports drink.

And so, I started to think about everything that was said, when there were three knocks on the door with a bad timing.

Yes ye~s. Give me a moment~." (Tamaki)

So that Katsuragi doesn't move I went to the door to confirm the password that only authorized people know about.

"What are Shuri-chan's three sizes?" (Tamaki)

『83-54-80 from top to bottom, she likes Samejima-kun.』(—)

"Your name." (Tamaki)

『It is Sajima Nanami!』(Nanami)

"You may enter!" (Tamaki)

『Thank you very much!』(Nanami)

When I removed the key from the door and opened it, Nanami was there in a white dress and saluted with a snap. She was carrying a large bag.

"Nanami… that's…" (Tamaki)

"That's right! I brought lunch!" (Nanami)

『Oooh—!』(Daichi, Tamaki)

Mine and Katsuragi's voices overlapped.

To be frank, Nanami also didn't return home and offered us her cooperation. Right from the start, Nanamin didn't participate in the usual bullying, and after luring him with her boxed lunches, it was easy. She even managed to reach the level of speaking with Katsuragi.

She volunteered to bring lunch every day, and to join in on our practice.

… Speaking of which, us three spend more than half of our time together these days.

“Good morning Yui-chan, today I have light sandwiches and a light salad~.” (Nanami)

She took multicolored Tupperware out from the bag where the sandwiches were packed.

Everything seemed to be very delicious. Immediately, Katsuragi held out his hands.

“It’s good!” (Daichi)

Where did his tiredness from a moment ago go? Katsuragi filled his mouth with the delicious food.

“It was worth making if you say that.” (Nanami)

“Any meal Sajima makes is delicious~.” (Daichi)

Without stopping, without stopping.

Saying his impressions, Katsuragi threw them into his mouth one after another. Looking at it, I was a little irritated and pinched his stomach.

“Ow-!? W-what did you do that for, Tamaki!” (Daichi)

“… No reason. Finish eating so that we can resume the practice. Overeating is no good you know? You need to lose weight.” (Tamaki)

“Eh, but, I want to eat…” (Daichi)

“Do you understand me!?” (Tamaki)

“Y-yeah! I got it, I got it!” (Daichi)

Pressured by my atmosphere, Katsuragi nodded his head many times. Nanami smiled and giggled from our exchange.

… Nanami was thoroughly enjoying my reaction.

“E-enough already! Nanami, I’ll get angry!” (Tamaki)

“Sorry, sorry. But you know?” (Nanami)

“What?” (Tamaki)

Nanami clapped once, and answered my question.

“But, teasing Yui-chan… it’s fun.” (Nanami)

“Please stop!? Ah, Katsuragi don’t try to stealthily continue eating!” (Tamaki)

“Damn, so persistent…!” (Daichi)

While having such a conversation, we happily enjoyed lunch and after ten minutes resumed the special training.

… Katsuragi’s schedule from now on will be firm…!

No one could blame me for it.

Story 3-19『Counterattack』

The secret rooftop special training that was condensed into two weeks ended.

"… There's quite a difference, Katsuragi…" (Tamaki)

"Really…" (Nanami)

Nanamin and I looked at the young man in front of us, and gave our honest opinions.

On the last day of winter break, I looked back on how Katsuragi changed… Katsuragi's outward appearance was different from before.

The difference between the before and after was amazing.

All the same that didn't mean he changed to the one in Rostalgia. Still, results steadily appeared.

The roundness of his face was gone, and his stomach that had stuck out had withdrawn splendidly. His arms were also covered with muscle and not just fat. Perhaps, because this was a virtual world this could happen.

"Yeah, even I doubt it." (Katsuragi)

Katsuragi clapped his stomach.

"I didn't think that I would ever not see my stomach I looked down." (Daichi)

"It's the result of your effort." (Tamaki)

"… That's right. If there were no results, I'd cry." (Daichi)

It's reasonable that Katsuragi would say that. Because I packed Katsuragi's schedule to the limit.

Running, weight training, and combat practice etc. That menu that seemed tight was made for Katsuragi.

"Well, at any rate I'm looking forward to tomorrow." (Daichi)

"You might be mistaken for a transfer student." (Nanami)

"It's like Nanamin said. I vote you'll be mistaken for someone else." (Tamaki)

"I'll do the same as Yui-chan." (Nanami)

"Me too… well, I don't want to become a bet." (Daichi)

"Isn't it fine? All of us think that Katsuragi looks different than before." (Tamaki)

“Thinking about it, it has become somewhat fun.” (Daichi)

“The combat training will become more severe starting tomorrow though.” (Tamaki)

“Huh? That’s interesting? My body suddenly began to hurt all over.” (Daichi)

“Then, I’ll loosen you up. Hey, lend me your arms.” (Tamaki)

I forcibly pulled his arms that he had folded behind his back with all of his strength. I took his hand and pulled so that his elbow straightened out.

“Wai-, Tamaki, that’s dangerous!! It’ll bend!?” (Daichi)

“You two are good friends~.” (Nanami)

“Right?” (Tamaki)

“No, wait! No matter how you look at this it is violen—aaaaah!?” (Daichi)

After that, I loosened Katsuragi’s body until he was weakly collapsing and looked like a mollusk.

“… Damn… my body is screaming everywhere…” (Daichi)

“It’s because it’s bad to say something like that. Other than that, quickly come over here so we can start the strategy meeting.” (Tamaki)

“… Where did you get so much power… Nowadays, a violent heroine isn’t popular.” (Daichi)

“Katsuragi-kun. Did you say something?” (Tamaki)

“Your eyes aren’t smiling! They’re scary! I got it, I’m coming! Hey, Sajima too.” (Daichi)

“Ye~s.” (Nanami)

After joking along with me, Katsuragi, who was receiving a massage from Nanamin—since it was Nanamin who offered it, he couldn’t stop her—came over even though he complained.

… Recently, Katsuragi hasn’t been anxious around Nanamin.

“What is it? Your cheeks are puffed up.” (Daichi)

“… It’s nothing… You’re reading into it too much.” (Tamaki)

I passed the two a piece of paper that had what we would do from now on written on it. It had the role and method they would have in defeating Samejima on it.

“… It’s amazing, Tamaki. This is really well done.” (Daichi)

“I want Katsuragi to win. You’ve worked hard.” (Tamaki)

“I-is that so… thanks, Tamaki.” (Daichi)

“Fufu. Don’t worry about it.” (Tamamki)

“Wow~, you’re so sweet~.” (Nanami)

Nanamin used her hand to cover her blushing face, our exchange was being openly expressed.

“Y-you two! Now isn’t the time to happily stare at each other like that, this is a strategy meeting!” (Nanami)

We had trouble unlocking our gazes from each other, and as expected Nanamin decided to advance the conversation by pointing it out.

“… Even so it is fine to leave it as it is for a bit longer…” (Tamaki)

“Yui-chan?” (Nanami)

“… No, it’s nothing. Well, I’ll now tell you what to do starting tomorrow—“ (Tamaki)

The opening ceremony. The three of us went to school as we had discussed the day before. Happily, arm in arm.

That said, I was only doing this because Nanamin brought it up. To the bitter end, I did this to rile up Umahara, not because I want to flirt with Katsuragi.

It’s definitely not because of that.

“… Nanamin. Stop staring at me with that warm gaze.” (Tamaki)

“But, Yui-chan’s face has such an amazing smile on it.” (Nanami)

“Eh, you’re kidding!” (Tamaki)

“Just kidding.” (Nanami)

“Nanamin!!” (Tamaki)

“Quiet down you two. We’ve been the center of attention since a while ago.” (Daichi)

We climbed up the stairs while chatting with such a feeling. Without stopping, I took a deep breath, and entered the classroom like normal.

The classroom became silent. However, whispers arose when they saw Katsuragi.

“W-who is that guy…?” (—?

“Tamaki’s boyfriend…? But, who is that guy?” (—)

“A transfer student maybe?” (—)

Nanamin desperately tried not to laugh at the misguided guesses while going to her seat. Katsuragi and I went up to the platform. Katsuragi powerfully declared before everyone.

“I… Katsuragi Daichi, am going out with Tamaki Yuina!” (Daichi)

“…. Wha-?” (—)

『Eeeeeeeh!?』

A large chorus of voices from around the classroom arose in surprise. Everyone stopped what they were doing. Only Samejima was glaring. Was it the composure of a strong person?

… Even like that, Katsuragi will definitely defeat you.

—Begin the counterattack.

◇◆◇◆◇◆◇◆◇◆◇◆◇◆

Two weeks had passed since the declaration of war. So far the teasing of Katsuragi had quieted down. I think it is because of two things.

First, Katsuragi’s change. His appearance was clearly different than before. Losing his fat, his weak image disappeared. Thanks to that those guys found it hard to start a fight with him. Though, being held back like that would only last a few days.

And so the second reason was his relationship with me and Nanamin.

Since we who belonged to the upper caste in the class stuck to him at all times, they couldn’t pick on him. At least they couldn’t while Nanamin and I were there.

However, this would also have a limit. For that reason, we began. The time was right.

“… I’m a bit nervous.” (Daichi)

Katsuragi wasn’t able to calm down, repeatedly opening and closing his hand.

This would be his first serious fight.

“It’s alright. Katsuragi won’t lose to that guy. Besides, we’ll lure Umahara here.” (Tamaki)

“You’ve especially appealed to lure him, right?” (Nanami)

What Nanamin meant was my and Katsuragi’s behavior. Being always chatting and often touching in class, calling to each other at lunch and coming here. And furthermore, with Nanamin.

It was truly terrific. Umahara's–our prey's–scorching glare.

"Then, I'll go over it again. First, Nanami will hand this to Umahara." (Tamaki)

I took the fake love letter out of my pocket, and handed it to her.

This time I'll make use of that guy's goodwill towards her.

"It's fine for Yui-chan to say that Katsuragi-kun threatened us right?" (Nanami)

"Yeah. Since he would find it unnecessary to hear more to choose between Katsuragi and Nanamin's credibility." (Tamaki)

That's right. He wouldn't care about reason and would believe that Nanamin was being forced to pretend to accompany him against her will.

What's important is which one he believes.

"However, will he really come?" (Nanami)

"No problem. He has the chance of raising his value in the eyes of the successfully rescued me. And above all, his pride should prevent him from running away." (Tamaki)

"Yea~h… I still don't understand that well…" (Nanami)

"I get it. Because he's a simple man. He wants to look cool in front the girls." (Daichi)

"Well, since Katsuragi is also a man, don't worry about it… Well, Katsuragi and I will go to standby at the place Umahara will go to from Nanamin's love letter." (Tamaki)

"Then, it's fine to fight and beat him?" (Daichi)

"Yeah. Simply put, it should be fine there." (Tamaki)

When we finished reaffirming the strategy, I held out my right arm. The other two guessed my meaning and put their palms on my hand.

"From now on we look to win! For our first victory! Do your best!" (Tamaki)

"Yeah!!" (Daichi)

"Yea-!" (Nanami)

We cheered towards the sky, and it was absorbed by the cloudless blue sky.

On the same rooftop as usual. We were here on standby, waiting for him to arrive to the meeting place written on Nanamin's letter.

"… Umm, he's a bit late…" (Daichi)

Looking at his watch, Katsuragi said so.

My pulse beat in my chest as the time for the decisive battle drew closer. I wasn't tense, I was excited.

I predict that Katsuragi was also the same.

I mean, we've been smiling about this since situation a while ago.

The person himself didn't seem to realize it, but Katsuragi was doing warm-up exercises.

"… Ah, a mail…" (Tamaki)

I opened the cellphone I was carrying in my hand that I noticed vibrating.

The sender was Nanamin, saying that Umahara was headed here.

I closed the screen and looked up.

"… He'll be here soon, Katsuragi." (Tamaki)

"… Got it." (Daichi)

When he heard me, Katsuragi began to stretch and bend. He tried to hide his trembling so that I would be find.

… Even so, it was normal for his hands to tremble like that.

"T-Tamaki!?" (Daichi)

Katsuragi rose his voice in surprise.

It was natural. I mean, I was leaning against Katsuragi's back.

"What's the matter?" (Tamaki)

I put my hand on his. Though it was usually cold, right now it was warm. That told me how he felt.

"What's the matter, is it. You, doing something like that…" (Daichi)

"I mean, Katsuragi is nervous so I think I'll relax you." (Tamaki)

"E-even so, wasn't there another way?" (Daichi)

"I don't want to be separated from you." (Tamaki)

"… … … –" (Daichi)

"Even if you fail here, it's alright because I will never leave Kasturagi." (Tamaki)

I didn’t know what Katsuragi was anxiously thinking about. Was he afraid of fighting, or afraid of losing? I’m sure there are other reasons.

That’s why, I wanted to reduce them even if just a little. I want to support him. Genuinely thinking these things, I noticed that I was embracing Katsuragi.

“… What is it. You are a strange person…” (Daichi)

“I don’t mind even if I am weird. As long as I can be with Katsuragi.” (Tamaki)

“… Coming from someone who called a man over using a love letter… good grief.” (Daichi)

Katsuragi put a hand on my head and stroked it a little roughly.

“Thanks. I don’t know, but how many times do I have to say it?” (Daichi)

“You still have a ways to go from now on. Until then, I’ll be in your care.” (Tamaki)

Separating from him, I clapped him on the back.

Katsuragi was unable to respond with words, but I didn’t mind. I mean, he would show me his response from now on.

“Alright! You can do it, Daichi! Your first battle!” (Tamaki)

“Yeah!” (Daichi)

Our counterattack begins now.

Story 3-20 『Performance』

Speaking of the standard confession at the bottom of the school building, a classroom in the evening, or an unmanned rooftop… I chose the back of the schoolhouse.

“Tamaki!?” (—)

The target had already arrived at the meeting place.

As soon as he say my face, his expression changed. This was expected.

Because right now, I was pretending that I was being trapped by Katsuragi.

“Umahara! Help m-!?” (Tamaki)

In the middle of asking for help, Katsuragi closed my mouth with his hand. He drew me close without changing.

“H-hey! Katsuragi! What are you doing!” (Umahara)

“So noisy, shut up! This person is bad! She double-crossed me!” (Daichi)

“You’ve been making Tamaki keep you company against her will!” (Umahara)

He bellowed.

Blood began to rush to Umahara’s head. I tapped Katsuragi’s knee with the hands held behind my back.

It was the signal to provoke him. Accordingly, Katsuragi spoke.

“If you think that, I dare you to take her! Think you can!?” (Daichi)

“Wha-…” (Umahara)

“It can’t be that you’re saying you’re afraid of me right? Still, I don’t mind. Tamaki will just keep being mine!” (Daichi)

… For a moment, I wondered if he should hit me. I braced myself for such a situation.

“Please! Umahara!” (Tamaki)

Attacking the retreating enemy with a scream, Umahara finally stirred.

“… Damniiit!!” (Umahara)

“Here he comes!” (Daichi)

In order to guarantee my freedom Katsuragi brushed off Umahara’s punch with his arm.

In order to not interfere, I immediately withdrew from there.

Katsuragi confirmed it before letting out a left front kick. It was a critical hit as it hit Umahara's unguarded side, and though he braced his legs it wasn't effective and was blown back.

"Ga-ha…!?" (Umahara)

"That's not all!" (Daichi)

Katsuragi stamped on Umahara who had fallen. Many, many times.

Each and every time the groaning lessened, and was instead replaced with a crying voice.

"S… stop it…" (Umahara)

"You're noisy. Shut up." (Daichi)

Katsuragi seized Umahara by the hair, pulling his head up and smacking Umahara's face with his palm.

"O-ow…!?" (Umahara)

Pashin!

"S-sor-…" (Umahara)

Pashin!

"P-please…" (Umahara)

"Was there a time that you stopped when I asked? None, right? Then you know what's about to happenDaichi)

This time, Katsuragi made a fist and held it high. Understanding what would be next, Umahara began begging for his life.

"I'm s-sorry! Anything, I'll do anything! Please stop it! Please!!" (Umahara)

Without caring about me asking for help earlier, he cried and begged regardless of how he looked.

At the least, he didn't tell me to run away. Therefore my feelings weren't diminished at all.

… Well, even if he told me to escape, I would stay to record what happened.

"It's a promise then." (Tamaki)

I closed the camera feature that was recording since a moment ago. Confirming the folder, it was properly recorded.

“T-Tamaki? W-what are you…” (Umahara)

Umahara was unable to grasp the situation. So I informed him.

“Umahara… the confession. It was a lie.” (Tamaki)

“… … … Eh?” (Umahara)

“I hate you… I just lured your out here.” (Tamaki)

“N-no way…” (Umahara)

His expression turned to one of despair.

His face lost its energy.

“Katsuragi. Don’t let him get away. Because we need him from now on.” (Tamaki)

“Yeah, it was like that.” (Daichi)

Katsuragi cracked his neck with a *Koki*. Umahara’s body trembled. The situation was perfect.

“Then, let’s do the final binding.” (Tamaki)

“Time to break him, huh.” (Daichi)

Katsuragi extended his hand towards Umahara.

Afterwards, we continued until Umahara promised to comply with our instructions.

◇◆◇◆◇◆◇◆◇◆◇◆◇◆

We were accompanied by Umahara the next day.

It wasn’t an exaggeration to say that coming with us was fated. Because it was a once in a lifetime chance from us.

Today’s last class was devoted to assigning the roles of the play.

As committee chairman I listen the students that were candidates on the blackboard in the front.

After the behind-the-scenes roles were filled, we finally started with the starring roles.

“Well, I think we will now decide the actors. First of all, I want to determine who the hero and heroine, who are the axis of the story, are… this time it will be limited to recommendations only. Because this is important. And so, does anyone-?” (Tamaki)

“Yes ye~s” (Shuri)

“Yes, Shuri-chan.” (Tamaki)

“I think Samejima-kun would be the best hero after all!” (Shuri)

Shuri-chan still recommends Samejima. It couldn’t be helped because I didn’t tell her the strategy. Rather, I was grateful that it was moving along as I expected.

“Ah, so, Samejima. Should I count you as a candidate?” (Tamaki)

“Yeah, I don’t mind. Then I recommend Hamakaze as the heroine.” (Samejima)

“Well then, that’s the first two. Is there no one else?” (Tamaki)

I looked around the classroom, but no one else rose their hand. I didn’t want the amount to increase. Otherwise, the fight would not be carried out.

“… Alright. Looks like there isn’t. Then, I’ll recommend one last person.” (Tamaki)

I told everyone such, and forcefully wrote a name on the blackboard. Those behind me became noisy.

I’d gotten used to this.

“My recommendation is Katsuragi Daichi.” (Tamaki)

“Then, I recommend Tamaki Yuina as the heroine.” (Daichi)

Katsuragi gave a response similar to Samejima’s as a form of revenge.

Of course, Samejima flared up.

“Oioi, Tamaki. Are you serious?” (Samejima)

“What do you mean? I recommended Katsuragi because I thought he was suitable.” (Tamaki)

“Such an ugly person should not play the leading part. It’s unpleasant to see an acting pig.” (Samejima)

Laugher suddenly rose up. Nanamin was frowning. When Katsuragi was spoken ill of… her composure broke.

“No, I think when it comes to it a guy with a filthy soul like you would be the unpleasant one. Hey, do you even have a soul?” (Daichi)

Katsuragi stood up from his seat to ridicule Samjima.

“Tormenting someone as a hobby, I don’t think Samejima could do it.” (Daichi) [TN: Samejima’s name in this line was read as “クズ”, or waste/garbage/scrap/etc.]

“… What’s with that. Aren’t you getting cocky?” (Samejima)

“No, it’s nothing like that. However, I wonder which of us is inferior, I’m thinking about some way to let you know.” (Daichi)

“… Letting me know, you say? It’ll be the same as always.” (Samejima)

When Samejima said that, young men in the class stood up one by one. Looking at the situation, Katsuragi smiled.

It worked like a charm.

“Though I don’t mind doing it like this… it’s unfortunate. The peerless Samejima is afraid to have me as his opponent.” (Daichi)

“The fuck are you playing at.” (Samejima)

“So what will you do? Pin me down with everyone? You’re a coward after all. Though I’d never be defeated by pigs like you guys. Right, Sajima?” (Daichi)

“Wha-“ (Samejima)

Samejima was surprised by the unexpected name being called out. Things are going our way.

“That’s right. It’s pathetic to see…” (Nanami)

“… … …-!!” (Samejima)

Samejima’s face blushed with shame from Nanamin’s remark. He clenched his hands. He shoulders were shaking with anger. He pierced Katsuragi with a sharp glare.

“… Alright. Just as you wanted, I alone will be your opponent. I’ll take your provocation…” (Samejima)

“Even though I just said the truth… Well, it’s fine. So? Will we start here?” (Daichi)

“… No, just wait because I’m going to prepare a place for you to die. Don’t think that you’ll ever be able to have something like an enjoyable school life again.” (Samejima) [TN: First sentence wording is awkward… Suggestions?]

“Right back at you.” (Daichi)

“…Tch!” (Samejima)

Samejima clicked his tongue and left the classroom, going somewhere. Probably to reserve the place he declared. He’s the director’s grandson. If it’s something to this degree I’m sure he can get away with it.

My prediction was right, and Samejima returned after a few minutes with the key to the judo hall.

We went to the judo hall. Samejima used his influence to get permission from the teacher and it was now reserved. By his proposal, it was decided that they would fight here.

Katsuragi and Samejima confronted each other in the center. We surrounded it.

Perhaps, that guy also won't come out unhurt this time.

The referees were the spectators.

"… Trash. I never thought in my wildest dreams that you would pick a fight with me." (Samejima)

"Yeah, me neither. I thought I would always continue to yield… but I won't lose here." (Daichi)

"You think you can win?" (Samejima)

"I'll win. Because I won't give up." (Daichi)

Katsuragi smiled as he said that. Samejima didn't like that and gave him a cold glare.

"… It's fine. Bring it on." (Katsuragi)

"… …" (Samejima)

Following his words, Katsuragi kicked the ground.

"Fas-!" (Samejima)

Samejima saw Katsuragi's face coming at him in a straight line and began a horizontal hook. Katsuragi noticed and lowered his posture, sliding so that he wouldn't kill his momentum.

"Hmph-!" (Samejima)

However, Samejima predicted this and jumped, extending his leg to stamp on him.

"Kua-!?" (Daichi)

Though Katsuragi took some damage, he rose and threw down Samejima sideways by seizing his leg.

"Gu-!?" (Samejima)

Samejima's shoulder struck the ground. Although he let out his voice from the impact, he didn't lose his calm and escaped from Katsuragi's restraint.

"… Seriously…" (—)

"Did you see? Those movements…" (—)

“… You’re kidding right?” (—)

Every classmate expressed their impressions. Nanamin and I were smiling broadly.

That was the natural response when shown that much in an instant.

Because Katsuragi had fought against me for a long time, he should be able to see Samejima’s attacks clearly. As long as he doesn’t become frantic and lose his willpower, he won’t lose.

“Uraaah!” (Samejima)

Both of them stood up, though Samejima began his suicide attack first.

“You will kneel down! A guy like you!” (Samejima)

Grabbing his neck, he pivoted and did a one-armed shoulder throw over his back.

“I say the same to you!” (Daichi)

His nails bit into Samejima’s wrist while he was being thrown.

“—!?” (Samejima)

Samejima unconsciously released his grip in the middle of it. Katsuragi’s back hit the floor after being thrown into the air, he properly defended.

“Y-Yui-chan. Is he… okay?” (Nanami)

“He’s fine. How many times do you think I threw him? That defense was first class.” (Tamaki)

I had been throwing him during the combat training sessions. It was to increase his ability to defend. Because if something like this happened, defending would be useful.

Katsuragi also disliked the pain, and memorized defense first.

“So don’t worry. Shouldn’t you be cheering him on?” (Tamaki)

“You’re right. Hang in there, Katsuragi-kun!” (Nanami)

Nanamin was jumping up and down while cheering on Katsuragi. However, the other spectators got used to what was going on and began raising their voices.

“Get him! Samejima!” (—)

“Beat up Katsuragi!” (—)

The fight heated up from the cheers.

“… Don’t lose, Katsuragi!!” (Tamaki)

I was also cheering him on.

Story 3-21『Confession』

“You trash!” (Samejima)

“Shut up!” (Daichi)

They grappled each other from the front. The one pushed down—

“What the…!?” (Samejima)

—was Samejima.

“Where did you get so much strength…!” (Samejima)

“Unfortunately for you, my coach is a woman with superhuman strength! I’m not about to lose to you!” (Daichi)

Katsuragi was pressing down on Samejima and forced him to his knees. However, Samejima was determined and started to twisted his arm.

“Damnit-!” (Daichi)

Since there was a possibility of him breaking free of the unskilled attack, Katsuragi was forced to reluctantly abandon his grip.

The two temporarily gained some distance between each other. However, it looks like that wasn’t it. Because of what happened next.

“I won’t stop!” (Samejima)

Samejima immediately regained his footing and closed the distance in one go. Samejima knew karate, but it was a modernized version of karate.

Samejima took a Hanmi stance with his left side and let out a left jab. [TN: Hanmi stance is this]

The left jab was repeated with his right for a one-two.

“Gofu-…!!” (Daichi)

Samejima’s left fist hit. Unexpectedly, Katsuragi seriously began to stumble backwards.

“Katsuragi-kun!” (Nanami)

Nanamin screamed. She crouched down with her hands covering her face. Cheers of victory could be heard from around the judo hall.

Samejima also pulled his right arm back for the next punch. He wore a distorted smile.

Naïve.

Katsuragi's face was hit with the left jab.

I understood. Katsuragi's eyes were alive. His eyes were firmly open, waiting for Samejima's next attack. He was gathering strength.

His aim was to counter.

Samejima released the right straight. Katsuragi took a step forward without avoiding it. He simultaneously let out a right fist.

Katsuragi gained speed before Samejima's thrust landed on his cheek.

Now it's his turn. Samejima couldn't dodge it. The fist vigorously hit Samejima's face.

"Uburu-!?" (Samejima)

Samejima was blown backwards and flew. The momentum kept him rolling without stopping.

This was the result of that guy's pride. Katsuragi ran up to him like a hunter moving to his prey.

He grabbed his foot, taking away his ability to move and flung him. Samejima was unable to move after taking the blow.

Katsuragi mounted him and began barraging him with his fists.

"Aaaaaaaaaaah!!" (Daichi)

His hands didn't stop.

"Damniiit!" (Daichi)

"Ngu-!" (Samejima)

Samejima was prepared for the barrage. He struck Katsuragi's abdomen and his attack stopped. Samejima used that instant, escaping from Katsuragi.

Though it was now his chance to follow up on Katsuragi, looking at Samejima he was also fatigued.

He took the offense and had the tables turned on him. Therefore, he did this because of his personality.

"You guys! Kill this trash!!" (Samejima)

—thought so.

He ignored the rules. He was planning on making use of his classmates the entire time.

A shame, Samejima.

That was a bad move.

A boy sprung up and jumped at Katsuragi.

However, I kicked him flying while he was on the way.

“… Huh?” (Samejima)

That boy hit his head on the wall, fainted and fell down. I became the deadline before the two people.

“If anyone passes me the same thing will happen to them… though if that’s fine with you feel free to come here?” (Tamaki)

『… … …』(Classmates)

After being shown such a terrible spectacle, no one was foolish enough to step forward.

… No, two people did.

“… Tamaki… You…” (Kijima) [TN: He uses ‘teme’, which is an incredibly offensive ‘you’. Could possibly be ‘fucker’?]

“… …” (Umahara)

It was Kijima and Umahara.

“Oi, what are you doing!!” (Kijima)

“I’m doing what I said. Right now it is a fight between Katsuragi and Samejima. Why would you guys butt in? It’s unnecessary.” (Tamaki)

“Tch-… You think you can stop us?” (Kijima)

Kijima proudly displayed his physical strength. He completely lowered his guard. I smiled at the absurdity.

“I can.” (Tamaki)

“How so?” (Kijima)

“Like this.” (Tamaki)

I rose my arm and snapped my fingers. This was the cue.

The person in question was sure to understand, since I gave him the order properly. Kijima thought that I was preparing something, and looked at me.

Now’s the chance.

“Aaah!” (Umahara)

“Guu-!?” (Kijima)

Umahara’s fist struck Kijima’s face. Kijima probably didn’t expect that.

There was no way that his friend would betray him.

“Wha-!? What are you doing, you guys!! Do what I said!” (Samejima)

The unexpected situation agitated him. The agitation created an opening. And so, I continued talking so that Katsuragi wouldn’t miss the opening.

Squeezing out the last of his strength, he dashed.

“Do you have the time to be looking away?” (Daichi)

“Uu-!?” (Samejima)

Katsuragi broke free of Samejima’s arm and stepped towards his chest. First, he sank his elbow into Samejima’s abdomen.

“Ka-…. Ha-…!” (Samejima)

Samejima’s body bent back and forth. Katsuragi had practiced that technique intently.

To the point where it was a conditioned reflex for his body.

He grabbed his legs.

Samejima’s body turned around.

“Taste it! My pain, my suffering. All of it!!” (Daichi)

Supaan!! I heard a comforting sound.

It was decided.

Samejima couldn’t move because of the hit to his head.

“Haa… haa… haa…!” (Daichi)

The excitement hadn’t settled into Katsuragi.

“Ah… gah…” (Samejima)

Samejima was tenaciously grasping onto Katsuragi’s arm even while collapsing. He shook it off easily. He tore off the chains that had always bound him.

“… Sear this into your memory. The view from the very bottom.” (Daichi)

Hearing those words, the man who had collapsed fainted.

Everyone acknowledged the victory.

『… … … …』(Classmates)

“Katsuragiii~!!” (Tamaki)

“-! Wait, Tamaki!” (Daichi)

I jumped at Katsuragi who was standing like normal. Even though he said that, he caught me.

“You did it, Katsuragi! You beat Samejima!” (Tamaki)

Saying that fact again caused half of the class to be astonished, though from the other half rose sounds of fear.

“You’re kidding…” (—)

“That trash won…” (—)

“Oi, isn’t this bad…!” (—)

Those that had nothing to do with us left the judo hall. One after another the classmates left. Finally it was just Katsuragi and I, and the collapsed Samejima… Nanamin was gone, did she take me into consideration?

Silence returned once more. The victor was motionlessly staring at his red hands. He began to tremble a little.

“… Tamaki.” (Daichi)

“Hm? What is it?” (Tamaki)

“… I won, right?” (Daichi)

“… Yeah, you won.” (Tamaki)

“I defeated Samejima?” (Dacihi)

“That’s right. You defeated Samejima with your own hands.” (Tamaki)

“… Suu.” (Daichi)

Katsuragi inhaled deeply.

He let out joy that welled up from the pit of his stomach. It showed in his expression.

“… Is that so…” (Daichi)

“… … …” (Tamaki)

I smiled, looking at Katsuragi’s profile who’s smiling face looked to be about to burst.
◇◆◇◆◇◆◇◆◇◆◇◆◇◆

“… I wonder why Katsuragi called me to a place like this…” (Tamaki)

After defeating Samejima, Katsuragi fastened Samejima to a pole to take a photo of his unsightly figure.

The photo of Samejima’s scribbled face was magnificent, and I immediately sent it to my friends with my phone. Even now the phone wouldn’t stop vibrating.

… Anyways, since a while ago… Katsuragi looked so cool…

I can still picture that perfect shoulder throw. Seeing Katsuragi confronting him without giving up no matter how many times he fell, I thought that his tenacity remained the same.

As I wondered if it was because he didn’t cool down from the excitement until later, I didn’t notice the person who approached me from behind.

“Tamaki!” (Daichi)

“Hyau!?” (Tamaki)

Something cold touched my cheek and I let out a strange voice. Katsuragi was laughing with abandon after hearing it.

“… You got such a cold juice when it is cold, on purpose?” (Tamaki)

“No, this one’s… Kuku… mine, here is… your’s… Pupu.” (Daichi) [TN: He can’t stop laughing LOL]

“D-don’t laugh!” (Tamaki)

I took the hot coffee from Katsuragi.

Pushing the tab open, the heat of the slightly bitter coffee streamed through my cold body. After drinking half, Katsuragi began to talk.

“… Hey, Tamaki.” (Daichi)

“Hmm?” (Tamaki)

“Today’s event… I didn’t dream it right?” (Daichi)

“Obviously. What foolish thing are you saying?” (Tamaki)

“… Then, from tomorrow onwards… I’m not trash anymore right?” (Daichi)

“From tomorrow on, and up until now, Katsuragi has never been trash. We’ve merely been fools.” (Tamaki)

“… Is that so, someone like that… you. Therefore, to me as well… you…” (Daichi)

The second half was inaudible. I responded with a short “Hmm?” to have him repeat it and he motionlessly stared at me. When our eyes met he looked downward and covered his face with his hands.

“… Ah-, that’s definitely right. It’s no good for me. It’s already impossible.” (Daichi)

“What is?” (Tamaki)

“Even if you hear it you won’t regret it right?” (Daichi)

“Hurry up and say it. You’re a man right?” (Tamaki)

“… That’s right.” (Daichi)

Katsuragi sat up straight and quickly took a deep breath, recently due to the training his body was strong, then stood up and bowed at the waist—and told me words of love.

“I love you, Tamaki. You more than anyone else. Your smile, your tears, I want to monopolize them all. I want to be near you and defend you—I love you.” (Daichi)

“———“ (Tamaki)

Hearing those words, I didn’t understand at first. However, it permeated through my chest. A warm feeling spread through me.

How long have I waited to hear those sweet words? How much did I wish to hear those words?

My heart trembled with delight.

Hot tears flowed from my eyes. No matter how many times I wiped them away, I was unable to stop.

I knew it.

I love Katsuragi.

Love him more than anyone else.

Above all these feeling were proof. I couldn’t contain them. They burst from my chest.

I’d never conveyed these feelings.

In that case, I’ll tell him.

My beloved person was becoming flustered in front of me.

I was embracing Katsuragi with all of my strength.

“Uwa-“ (Daichi)

Katsuragi was unable to support himself from the sudden impact, and without change we fell.

His lips were defenseless.

“T-Tama—“ (Daichi)

“—Nnn.” (Tamaki)

I put my lips on his.

My second kiss with him. I was aware of my feelings this time.

… Ah. Kissing like this made me so happy…

Eventually, I slowly separated from him.

Then, I also confessed to him.

“I love you, Katsuragi~… I have… always loved you…!!” (Tamaki)

Tears began flowing again. Katsuragi embraced me and brought my head to his chest.

“… Ah… snow…” (Daichi)

Calmly, Katsuragi muttered so. I felt a pleasant cool feeling on my cheek.

Snow fell for the first time for this year.

As though it were blessing us.

Story 3-22『Bride』

“Uwa-!?” (Tamaki)

That moment’s events went way too quick and I was dropped to the ground.

“Oww…” (Tamaki)

While rubbing the spot that hit, I looked around. A familiar place.

… Yeah, this is the【Scorching Execution Ground】.

But, I wonder why I’m here?

I’m sure that I was with Katsuragi just now… that is, I was h-hugging him…

It’s natural that I’d be confused from being swiftly and painfully dropped into a dark place.

… Oh, I wonder if it’s because I cleared the trial?

As expected, as though if to say that was the correct answer, the game master appeared.

“Congratulations, Shield. You are the first person to succeed.” (Lily)

She clapped her hands with a *PachiPachi*. Thinking about the silence, Leadred-san wasn’t there.

“Akina isn’t here. We are still in the Labyrinth Corridor.” (Lily)

“… Lily can read minds?” (Tamaki)

“I dare say anyone could guess that after you looked around that much. Other than that, are you prepared?” (Lily)

“Ready? For what?” (Tamaki)

“Surely you didn’t forget…?” (Lily)

Lily was amazed and shrugged, sighing.

Hmm? What is it?

My clothes were… peculiar for an adventurer. My bag also returned… oh.

“That’s right… the second trial.” (Tamaki)

“You remembered? Well, it might have been inevitable after devoting yourself with all of your might to that man from the beginning.” (Lily)

… Though it was embarrassing, Lily pointed it out. I was desperate to have Katsuragi win against Samejima. I was so immersed in the academy that I started to forget it was the first trial.

"… Well, it's fine. Let's start. I'm eager." (Lily)

Lily put her right fist in front of her chest, and her left fist in a straight line above her chin. The left half of her body had protectors attached to the arm and leg.

"… The clear conditions?" (Tamaki)

"Defeat me. That's all." (Lily)

"I see, I see. In that case—I'm starting." (Tamaki)

I struck my palm and used magic.

"Frozen Earth!" (Tamaki)

The ground began freezing in a circle centered on my hand. The surface transformed into a snowy landscape. Of course, everything touching the ground was affected as well. Lily was being gnawed at from her feet.

"… Fufu, such a lovely magic." (Lily)

"… What did you say?" (Tamaki)

"Did you think my movement would be sealed with such a small amount of ice? If that's the case what you just did is nonsense… You do know what kind of dungeon boss I am, right?" (Lily)

After saying so, Lily sucked in a big breath. She then let out something that was not breath.

It was a flame.

"Flamethrower!!" (Lily)

A flame of high temperature sprayed from her mouth and melted my ice. In the blink of an eye the snowy landscape transformed into a brutal one.

Ah, that's right… Lily was a user of fire magic.

Right, because she's the—

"Scorching Execution Ground's… boss…" (Tamaki)

In other words, the professional of fire magic.

"Fufu. How will you defeat me?" (Lily)

—My attacks won't reach her.

What do I do? Defeat her without magic?

I don't know about that… but, I have to try.

I confirmed the amount of knifes in my pocket by touch.

"Oh, are you wavering?" (Lily)

"No… oh yeah. I actually have a question?" (Tamaki)

"What is it? Say it. I'll answer. A prize for being the first to arrive." (Lily)

"Thank you. Do the events in the Labyrinth Corridor affect the real body?" (Tamaki)

"Are you afraid of being injured?" (Lily)

"No, well, maybe. I am a girl you know." (Tamaki)

I rubbed my white skin. Lily wore a disappointed expression and let out a "Haa" before telling me.

"You're thinking about such a hopeful thing?" (Lily)

"In other words, it does affect it then." (Tamaki)

"This is the second trial. With no sense of urgency the meaning would be weakened. Geez, do you think you're fit to be the hero's wife like that?" (Lily)

"W-wife… I mean, I do love Katsuragi, but still, for that I have to go step by step from being lovers…" (Tamaki)

"… You are… innocent huh…" (Lily)

"S-shut up! Let's quickly continue! Come on!" (Tamaki)

"It's fine. Come at me." (Lily)

Once again Lily and I took a stance. She had an unchanging warlike style.

"I won't hesitate!" (Tamaki)

I threw three knifes from under my feet.

I want to damage her before it becomes hand-to-hand combat against her murderous physical strength!

"Icy Wind!" (Tamaki)

The icy wind applied to the knife, making it larger with ice.

Lily lightly waved her arm, that action was plenty to stop them!

“Multi Guard!” (Tamaki)

I used the chance to make ice shields on four sides in the same manner as Katsuragi had done.

“Crash!!” (Tamaki)

“Blazing Fist Dance!” (Lily)

“Tch-!” (Tamaki)

Flames flared up from her feet and were flickering, easily melting the ice shields. The bad affinity was making me have poor prospects in this fight.

I used Lily’s pause to dive into a sufficient distance between us.

“Like an insect flying into the fire! Blazing Fist Collect!” (Lily)

“Triple Guard!” (Tamaki)

“Something like that will not stop me!” (Lily)

The ice shield was constructed was cleanly shattered into small pieces, and the pyro fist struck my abdomen.

“Gah-…!” (Tamaki)

I was blown away and slammed into the wall.

There was a throbbing dull pain. Did a bone break?

As it was, it was bad.

There was a difference in both magic and physical ability. There was no way to win with conditions like that.

I hurriedly took a potion out of the bag and drank it.

With this the wound would heal—I had such a hopeful thought.

“… The pain… isn’t fading?” (Tamaki)

The pain I felt all over didn’t go away.

Was the amount not enough? I drank all of the recovery medicine I brought.

There was no effect… …

Why? Although I would have been able to understand it if I could calm down, since I was driven into a corner I couldn't think calmly.

To make up for that, Lily told me.

"Obviously, neither potions nor elixirs have no meaning in this place. Otherwise, you would have an overwhelming advantage." (Lily)

"Something like that…" (Tamaki)

However, this was completely my mistake. I was convinced that I would be able to use a potion at my own convenience.

This caused my chances of winning to fall significantly.

"Now then, it's not time to be overwhelmed! This comes next!" (Lily)

Lily turned her palm towards here and chanted an incantation.

"Cover with hellfire, consume, and burn away their sin. Pillar of Hellfire!" (Lily)

"–! Ice Membrane!" (Tamaki)

Sensing the danger to my life, I wrapped my entire body with a spherical membrane of ice. At that instant, a flame grew overhead.

It was a flame of hell that would certainly execute a sinner.

"Uwaaah!!" (Tamaki)

I focused on pouring all of my magic into it so that I wouldn't be burned. Even so, the high temperatures from being trapped inside caused my consciousness to dim.

The flames had ceased just as my magic was about to run out. I fell to my knees, and collapsed.

"Hoh, you endured it?… Though I say that, you're at death's door." (Lily)

"Haa… haa…" (Tamaki)

I couldn't return even a single word at the provocation. I was trapped.

… What can I do? How can I make it through this situation?

I thought desperately. My mind was working.

Katsuragi didn't give up from any kind of situation.

I need your help… Katsuragi…!

When I thought that, the metal ring on my finger caught my eye.

… … … Oh.

I had goosebumps. My thoughts exploded. The path to victory was being paved.

How did I forget something like this? Something so important.

Move… with this I can win.

"… Saving me again, Katsuragi…" (Tamaki)

Standing up, I chanted to invoke the key to the memento from the person I love.

"For those who die for their lord. Soul transfer. Ring of Death." (Tamaki)

With the effect activated, the shined a bluish-white. Magic poured from it into my body.

Whose power was this? It went without saying.

"What… did you do?" (Lily)

Lily sensed the increase in my magic and sharpened her vigilance.

Since I wouldn't be able to hide it, I told her the secret.

"This is the Ring of Death. One of the pair is the lord, the other the slave—" (Tamaki)

"I know that! However, something like that, why do you hold the Lord's Ring!?" (Lily)

The Ring of Death. The effects of the Lord's Ring and the Slave's Ring are different when invoked.

The Lord's Ring takes away all of the magic of the one who wears the Slave's Ring when invoked.

Taking away all of the magic means that the slave will faint.

This was made for the purpose of being used in the dungeon. It's like saying that the person who was the slave would die when it is used.

Therefore, Lily was surprised.

"Why, you say… because Katsuragi gave this to me. Besides, that guy can't die." (Tamaki)

"That's why I'm saying, what are you doing with it!? You're the wife!" (Lily)

“A woman supporting her man is an old trend you know. Now, we support each other.” (Tamaki)

I readied my knife.

It wasn’t a mistake.

I’m taking a risk from here.

Because I have an opportunity to seal her after turning the tables with this winning hand.

However, I don’t have a choice.

I wasn’t allowed to escape. Above all, I wouldn’t forgive myself if I did.

I won’t hesitate. I will accomplish this.

“—Hero’s Bride, I won’t underestimate you.” (Lily)

I will use every possible means to defeat her!

Story 3-23『Shield』

“Orah oraah!” (Lily)

Lily bombarded me with fireballs one after another.

I continued to desperately dodge them.

“Where did that power from a moment ago go!?” (Lily)

“Leave me alone! This is part of my strategy!” (Tamaki)

Using magic would be a waste. I can somehow avoid this level of attack.

“Even if you say that…” (Lily)

There was a group of three fireballs. I dived and rolled forward. The balls I left behind struck the wall and exploded.

“As expected, I have to attack too!” (Tamaki)

I took out knives and threw them. This time they would head to the left and right of Lily. I jumped to follow them.

“Phew-!” (Lily)

Lily deftly took care of the knives with her hands. During that, I drew close and drove my fist into her abdomen. Additionally, I fired off magic.

“Saying you could avoiding it at this range would be unreasonable. Ice Lance!” (Tamaki)

A spear of ice manifested from my hand and pierced through Lily’s waist—I thought.

However, she didn’t even have a scratch. No way… she melted it?

“Oi oi, it’s dangerous to contemplate in the middle of combat you know? Moreover leaving an opening like this!” (Lily)

She swung her thick muscles from overhead. I immediately crossed my arms in order to defend and went to my knees. It was an explosive front kick.

“Kya-!?” (Tamaki)

Abandoning myself to flying, welling up with nausea, I desperately raised my arms to endure it. At that instant, I brought back the attached knife that had dropped near Lily.

On the way, it stopped at and entangled with the obstacle. [TN: Obstacle read as ‘Lily’.]

“Mu-!?” (Lily)

“Icy Wind!” (Tamaki)

Revolving once in the air, the transparent thread that connected the knife to my hand caused it to fly through the ice and bite into Lily’s body, doing some minor damage.

“Hmph… thread, was it? Well, something to that degree just itches. If you want to seal my movements, you’re going to have to give it a bit more strength.” (Lily)

It seemed that it turned out the same as the Ice Spear earlier.

Though I wanted to save it for a little bit longer… it’s not going too well.

“… Now then, it’s my turn next. Fireball.” (Lily)

A fireball appeared in her hands when she spoke.

“… Still trying to hit me?” (Tamaki)

“Yeah. Though, it’ll be somewhat different this time. You know, something like this.” (Lily)

She hit two fireballs together. They absorbed into each other, becoming one large fireball.

“Fireball.”

She repeated the process again. It became slightly larger. Lily repeated it. Eventually it grew half her body in size.

The heat reached me from there.

“Next will be with this ball. You should run.” (Lily)

The huge fireball launched from her strong arm. I immediately flew backwards from the blast when it came into contact with the ground.

“It’s not over yet!” (Lily)

“Triple Guard!” (Tamaki)

I hurriedly put up an ice shield, but it took away control of my body and I wasn’t able to avoid it completely.

“Ah-…!” (Tamaki)

“Watch out! Here’s another big one!” (Lily)

Before I knew it she attacked with a gigantic fireball she made. I chanted to make another triple ice shield to stop the blow. However, it wasn’t stopping the force of the attack. The fire was also melting the ice.

Meanwhile, she was beginning to chant another magic.

“Emperor of Flame. Thou, burn those that hinder this one’s noble path.” (Lily)

“-!?” (Tamaki)

This is bad. Getting hit by an Emperor-class spell is very bad. I can’t let her finish that spell no matter what.

However, the approaching fireball won’t let me do that.

“Scream, evil inferior species. Become food for the blackened scorched earth.” (Lily)

“Aah!” (Tamaki)

The fireball finally disappeared.

Lowering my waist to get a better view, I saw Lily draw back her arm. A scorching flame was coiled around her arm.

Sensing what the significance of her posture, I immediately enclosed myself in a layer of ice.

“—Chaos Spiral.” (Lily)

Emperor-class magic was shot out from her extended fist.

It was a masterpiece.

The hellfire could extremely easily break through the bulwark and burn me to death.

Although I invoked the ice magic several more times, even that was practically meaningless.

“Ah… …” (Tamaki)

Barely making it through hell, I could do nothing but collapse. I didn’t even have the power to stand up.

Looking at my left arm, it was burned until it became brittle like black charcoal. Already, the blood had disappeared. I couldn’t feel any pain either.

As a small mercy, my right arm could barely move. Seeing that, I smiled.

“What is it, that smile. It’s unpleasant.” (Lily)

“… N-nothing. It’s just that I wish I could have been more useful…” (Tamaki)

I was unable to speak clearly. Like this, I may not be able to chant magic well.

Lily noticed it and sighed.

“… Looks like you are out of tricks. Well then, shall we put an end to this?” Lily)

There was a thunderous roaring sound as Lily's magic caused flames to wrap around her body. The power was concentrated, moving to her arms.

"No… it's not over yet…" (Tamaki)

Little by little I turned my quivering finger towards Lily. She probably thought that it was useless struggling. She sighed.

Lily took a step, then another towards me. Flames coiled around her arms in a spiral like from the magic earlier.

If she fires it, it'll be game over.

I don't want that.

Therefore, therefore, I—

"… Bang." (Tamaki)

—shot an『Ice Bullet』at Lily's chest from my finger.

"Kaha-…!?" (Lily)

The flame disappeared into a mist with her concentration was cut, replaced with bright red blood scattering out instead.

I've been hiding it until now.

I believed that I would without fail have a chance at some point and didn't use『Chant Substitution』. When I obtained it on that floor I set the trigger to invoke『Ice Bullet』to the action of『Shooting a gun』.

Because I thought that it wouldn't be possible to win the first bout by fighting normally, I didn't dare to use it.

Because Lily would be vigilant if I used it, I wagered on that.

I won the bet.

"Y-you… the heck was that!?" (Lily)

Lily's blood was pooling at her feet. Red liquid endlessly overflowed from the empty gaping hole.

"I have no obligation to tell you!" (Tamaki)

Stand up! Run through it! My legs!

For the sake of being next to that idiot, I can't afford to be defeated by someone like that with only this much difference in power!

"Ya-!" (Tamaki)

I threw the knife that was in my clothes. After that I formed the shape of a gun with my fingers and repeatedly shot it. Ice Bullets were shot.

"Not yet…!" (Tamaki)

The Ice Bullets followed the Knife so she couldn't stop them. They dug into her shoulders and legs. [TN: One bullet per area. Not sure how to say that, sorry.]

"Guh…! No way, are you using THAT!?" (Lily)

"Now, to top it off! Frozen Earth!" (Tamaki)

I filled the distance between us while taking something out of the pouch by once more covering the floor in ice with『Frozen Earth』to seal her movements.

"Kuh! I'm telling you that that trick won't work on me!" (Lily)

Lily opened her mouth wide and moved her chest to take a breath, she was trying to breath fire.

"Flamethr—" (Lily)

"I won't let you!!" (Tamaki)

"—Gah-!?" (Lily)

In one go, I kicked the ground and ran at her with all my strength while clenching my teeth to endure the pain.

I had predicted how she would use『Flamethrower』to react to『Frozen Earth』and made use of what was in my right hand, forcing it into her wide open mouth.

"Gopu-!?" (Lily)

"Thoroughly savor it!" (Tamaki)

I hit her chin from below with my palm. She crunched everything inside her mouth.

Since there's no way it's durability would stand her human beast fangs, it easily passed into her throat in small pieces.

"W-what did you!?" (Lily)

"… I put this into your mouth." (Tamaki)

I took out the goods that were in the pouch and showed them to Lily.

Knowing what she had eaten, her face paled. Because, it was something that was enough to endanger her life.

“T-that’s… Crystal Stone!?” (Lily)

As one would expect she was flustered from the effect of improperly using the Crystal Stone.

“Yeah. Furthermore, Fantra prepared it. That guy was one of the Six Demon Generals like you.” (Tamaki)

“Fantra… is it? Y-you defeated him!?” (Lily)

“Finished him off… that’s right. I don’t know after that… well, here’s the question.” (Tamaki)

I put away the Crystal Stone, raised my index finger and forcibly started to act like a quiz show host.

I forgot the pain in my throat from the excitement.

“Magic that the body cannot withstand has been poured into it. What happens to that body? The answer please, Lily!” (Tamaki)

I confidently laughed in my victory. Now I’ll surely have a horrible smiling face that wouldn’t lose to Katsuragi’s.

However, that’s not bad.

“… They’ll explode.” (Lily)

“Correct!” (Tamaki)

As I said that, I moved to a far distance away from Lily.

“… My loss?” (Lily)

Her amount of magic was large from the start. She didn’t explode immediately, and she bit her lip in vexation. However, she also looked glad.

“Sorry, since I can’t lose here.” (Tamaki)

“Don’t worry about it… Oh, one more thing. Will you listen?” (Lily)

“What is it? I’ll answer as a reward from earlier.” (Tamaki)

“Is your reason to follow Hero-sama『Because I love him』?” (Lily)

Lily’s question relieved me. The tension melted, and I smiled slightly.

“Yeah, that’s right. I love Katsuragi. Though, there’s one more reason.” (Tamaki)

It’s something that Katsuragi calls me on a regular basis. A role that only I can do.

Although I’m sure that idiot doesn’t mean it, I know.

I do what I want, go the way I wish.

Because I—

“Because I am the shield that protects him.” (Tamaki)

And so, smiling, I threw out my chest in pride and answered.

Story 3-Another 1『Nanamin Religion』

Daichi: “Err, good morning. Good day, good evening.”

Shuri: “Thank you for waiting. I think I’ll announce the results from the『Epic Tale of the Forsaken Hero Popularity Contest』!”

Shield: “This time we have Katsuragi and Shuri-chan, with me, Tamaki Yuina, as the coordinator. Nice to meet you.”

“It seems we’ve gathered 1,000 votes in total.”

“That’s right! Moreover, there is the possibility that we could have gotten more votes but the limit was set to 1,000 votes and the poll was stopped midway!”

“Endless thanks to the readers. Thank you very much.”

“Well then, shall we immediately move on to the announcement?”

“I’d like to mention that the first place has a brief story. Whose hands hold the glory of first place!? Well then, let’s see!”

“First of all will be 10th to 6th!”

==========

9th

• Samejima 2 votes 0.2%
• Fantra Angas 2 votes 0.2%
• Lily Shuraham 2 votes 0.2%
• Claria 2 votes 0.2%

8th

• Kijima 3 votes 0.3%

7th

• Messiah 11 votes 1.1%

6th

– Akina Leadred 39 votes 3.9%

==========

“… The first one seems like a typo, I wonder about the others?”

“10th place was omitted because it had 0 votes. Originally, it couldn’t be helped because the amount of choices were low.”

“There’s the name that all readers to have forgotten. Like Kijima, or Kijima, or Kijima.”

“Though it’s only one person… I don’t know why Messiah got less votes than Leadred-san.”

“Her sleeping face is so pretty~.”

“Perhaps it was affected by how much she loves fighting. Saying that, it’s probably a perfectly normal spot for a main character.”

“However, the person in question worried about it considerably. She’s thought more on it. See, look over there.”

“Hmm? … There’s a Maid-san sitting on the floor holding her knees…”

“Eh? Are you depressed?”

“… At any rate, I am a muscle brain woman who loves fighting. Although I love fighting, maid clothes? I’m wearing maid clothes… Obviously I’d be incredibly embarrassed for getting used to the frills, baka.” (Leadred)

“I-I haven’t seen her do something like rapidly mutter idle complaints before…”

“P-pulling myself together for the next ones, 5th and 4th place~!”

==========

5th

• Katsuragi Daichi 43 votes 4.3%

4th

• Hayase Fuuko 47 votes 4.7%

==========

“… Oh? Am I imagining it? I wonder why Katsuragi-kun’s name is in a place like this?”

“… Shuri-chan? For the time being, can you put your hands down? It’s dangerous. It was the voters.”

“That’s right, Shuri. Usually, a man can’t take first place in this kind of a popularity contest.”

“Then, first place is…”

“By the way, first place has been snatched by a heroine.”

“I-in other words, it’s very likely that I’ve gotten first place…!”

“Something like that. So, don’t act rashly, Shuri.”

“Y-yeah! Thanks, Katsuragi-kun!”

“Oh, they’ve started flirting again… I’ve had enough. Back to the story, the fourth place spot went to the one who, like me, joined the group midway through: Hayase-san.”

“Hayase-san’s image changed to cute in one go, don’t you think?”

“It’s hard to believe. A typical ‘before and after’ situation. She’s become really cute. It’s a pity she’s not here.”

“Hayase-san will probably feel happy from just those words. Come on, we’re wasting time, shall we go to the next one?”

“Reasonably, won’t it be Yui-chan?”

“… W-who knows? I-I don’t. IThat aside, why don’t I start from first place from here?”

“Hmm? What’s the matter, Shield?”

“No… I mean. Here, look.”

“Hmm?… … Ah.”

“Something like that. You realize?”

“B-but, can we afford to do something like that? I mean, isn’t it suspicious to abruptly change the order?”

“… I’ve prepared myself.”

“Don’t worry about it. No one will die.”

“I hope so… Then, let’s announce it! 3rd place!!”

==========

3rd

• Hamakaze Shuri 146 votes 14.6%

==========

“Ah, I remembered that I have something to do, so excuse me for a bit.”

“P-please calm down, Shuri! Stoppu! Stoppu!” [TN: Stop is in English.]

“Ridiculous! I won’t forgive these results!”

“Yeah, but, isn’t the thing you are holding clearly unnecessary for going out!?”

“Katsuragi-kun, let go! Let me go~!!”

※Please wait for a while until Hamakaze Shuri settles down.

“T-third place… Even though I’m a heroine… even though I’ve been here since the start…”

“Sh-Shuri-chan has a face that she can’t show to anyone on… K-Katsuragi. Do somethi-“

“Y-yeah. Since Shuri is first place for me, don’t worry about getting third place in the popularity poll.”

“It’s no good!! If I’m not first…”

“If you’re not first…?”

“If I’m not first… how can I openly do this or that with Katsuragi-kun!?”

“Well, next, let’s go, next.”

“Tamaki is cold and doesn’t think about her best friend…”

“Recently, the touchy scenes Katsuragi-kun have decreased… it’s so cruel!”

“… Don’t you guys act cozy enough every day?”

“Not enough!”

“… Then, to get 1st place in the next popularity poll (I’m not saying we’ll do one), you have to crate a better image of yourself. So, will you say those words?”

“Eh… do that…?”

“Do it~. I also want to see that. It’s cute.”

“R-really?”

“Yeah. I think everyone notices Shuri’s charm too.”

“I-is that so… Then, I’ll work hard… Let’s go…!”

“Li~ghty!”

※With my smartphone, Shuri changed into Light Shuri.
==========

2nd

• Tamaki Yuina (shield) 331 votes 33.1%

==========

“Yes! I, Tamaki Yuina, got second place!”

“… Huh? Shuri? She disappeared…”

“It’s all right. I’m sure she’s nearby. Apart from that… don’t you have any words of congratulations?”

“Well, that’s… Congratulations.”

“… That’s it? Don’t you want to tease me?”

“Ku-… come here.”

“Ye~s. Ah, though hugging Katsuragi is regrettable, it’s unavoidable~. After all, I have to atone~.”

“… You’re not fooling anyone with that smile on, Tamaki.”

“… Ehehe.”

“Don’t charm me with that face and announce first place.”

“Ah! Yui-chan, you’re crafty!!”

“Ah-, she revived.”

“Yui-chan’s flirting time is over! Next, the last one! Let’s go!”

“Shuri-chan is stingy.”

“Well well… However, who is above us…?

“Well? Does Yui-chan know?”

“Nope. I haven’t seen 1st place yet because it was on a separate piece of paper.”

“Well, let’s look together then?”

“That’s right. Yeah! Well then, Yui-chan, let’s go~!”

“I know, don’t rush. Well, the first place winner of the first『Epic Tale of the Forsaken Hero Popularity Contest』is… …!!”

==========

1st

• Sajima Nanami 372 votes 37.2%

==========

“”“WHAT-!?”””

Story 3-24 『Foolish』

"… … -" (Shuri)

Still being assaulted by that strange feeling, I saw Oginomiya Academy before I knew it.

The scene in front of me hadn't changed since last time.

I took a deep breath because if I didn't do it this way I'd repeat the same mistake.

… This Katsuragi-kun is a fake. There is no reason to save him. The real Katsuragi-kun has already felt more pain than this.

That is what I told myself.

"… Nanamin." (Shuri)

"What's the matter? Shuri-chan?" (Nanami)

I gaze down at the floor like the person next to me and quietly murmur into Nanamin's ears.

She's the person I trust the most. Though the Yui-chan of 'now' likes Katsuragi-kun, the Yui-chan of 'here' has not yet been included as an ally.

On that topic, I know that Nanamin never wanted to bully him.

"… Hey, do you want to leave? I kind of feel…" (Shuri)

"Yeah. I've been fed up of this too. Let's go." (Nanami)

As I thought, Nanamin agreed. She immediately put her wisdom into action.

"Yui-chan, Yui-chan." (Nanami)

"Hmm? What is it, Nanamin?" (Tamaki)

"For Shuri-chan, today is 'that' day… since she's feeling sick I'm going to bring her to the infirmary." (Nanami)

"Ah, okay, I got it. Couldn't you go to the dorms? Since it's already after school." (Tamaki)

"Thanks. Well, she decided to return after a short break. Shuri-chan, do you have your bag?" (Nanami)

"Y…yeah." (Shuri)

I handed my bag to Nanamin and walked with an unsteady gait to pretend that my physical condition was bad. Nanamin accompanied me and patted my back.

"I wonder… if it's okay now?" (Nanami)

“… Yeah. Let’s go down the stairs and leave the academy to return to the dorms. And… I want to talk about this a bit…” (Shuri)

“I don’t mind. Let me change my clothes, then I’ll head there.” (Nanami)

“Thanks, Nanamin… Let’s keep this act up until the school gate, please.” (Shuri)

“Yes ye~s.” (Nanami)

Nanami’s answer dragged on. She seemed to be refreshed from being able to escape that place.

Me abandoning Katsuragi-kun… pained my heart.

I could endure it by thinking about the future. It’s something that I had to do.

“… Wait for me, Katsuragi-kun. I will definitely save you.” (Shuri)

◇◆◇◆◇◆◇◆◇◆◇◆◇◆

“Here, Nanamin. Juice.” (Shuri)

“Thanks. Itadakune.” (Nanami) [TN: Shortened ‘itadakimasu’ + feminine ending particle. Not sure how to put that in English.]

Nanami was on top of a cushion, I was sitting on my bed with a mouthful of apple juice.

Though you’d expect some juice to flow onto my chest, something like that obviously didn’t happen.

I emptied the cup immediately, cutting to the main subject.

“Nanamin, please listen.” (Shuri)

“Hmm? Wha~t?” (Nanami)

“Katsuragi-kun and I, I want to go out with him. I want you to cooperate with me.” (Shuri)

I bowed as I requested her.

“… E-eh!? W-what’s wrong, Shuri-chan? I, what’s with…” (Nanami)

As I guessed, Nanamin was in a state of panic. However, she already seemed to calm down from taking a deep breath.

“A-anyway, raise your head. There’s a strange tension like this…” (Nanami)

“S-sorry. Again, to speak seriously, I thought I would ask like this.” (Shuri)

Lifting my head after Nanamin asked, she had on a kind of complicated expression.

“… Though it might be impolite to ask Shuri-chan something like this…” (Nanami)

“W-what is it?” (Shuri)

“It’s… why do you suddenly want to become Katsuragi-kun’s lover… I thought…” (Nanamin)

“… … I like him, that’s all.” (Shuri)

I answered Nanamin’s extremely natural question.

“Katsuragi-kun has… a strong heart, a gentle personality and, and…” (Shuri)

“Y-yeah, I already understand so it’s okay, Shuri-chan.” (Nanami)

“I-is that so?” (Shuri)

“Yes yes. I truly understand. Because I understand… I’ll help you.” (Nanami)

Nanamin put her hand on my shoulder with a *Pon*, giving me a sweet wink.

“R-really!? Really Nanami, you’ll help me?” (Shuri)

“I wouldn’t lie… However, I have one condition.” (Nanami)

“W-what? I’ll do whatever I can.” (Shuri)

“C-could you please not stick to me like that? I’ll definitely help you with your love, Shuri-chan, but that’s only for coming up with plans and the like, you have to do the important thing by yourself, without my help. Alright?” (Nanami)

“Important thing?” (Shuri)

“Yeah, the important thing. Since I’m not going to tell you what it is, think about it by yourself.” (Nanami)

“No way~, Nanamin. Even I understand that much.” (Shuri)

What Nanamin was talking about was definitely the confession. Nanamin was saying for me to tell him my feelings myself.

… It’s alright. Since I’ve already confessed to Katsuragi-kun many times. I think I can tell him from my own mouth.

“Alright, in that case there’s no problem! Now to make Katsuragi-kun fall madly in love with Shuri-chan!” (Nanami)

“M-madly in love you say… No, that’s right… I wonder what I should do?” (Shuri)

“Mmm… First of all, since it’s indispensable to increase his favorable impression of you, you should keep talking to him every day, shouldn’t you? Since if you are too rash, even Katsuragi-kun may find it suspicious. After that—“ (Nanami)

“W-wait a sec! Let me get my notepad!” (Shuri)

Hitting the brakes on Nanamin’s strategies that she was thinking up one after another, I took my notebook out of my desk and began to write in it.

Before I knew it my first strategy meeting with Nanamin continued until the next day.

“Katsuragi-kun!” (Shuri)

“… … …” (Daichi)

It would be meaningless to not talk to him. Therefore it is important to keep talking, even if I’m ignored it’s important to persevere and speak.

That was Nanamin’s opinion.

I also agree with it. I think conversation is the best method to communicate.

While at it, I was worrying about Yui-chan; the classroom became noisy, but right now I’m not concerned about it.

I wanted to talk with Katsuragi-kun and laugh with him. I also want him to come to like me.

While at school, I wholeheartedly used all possible time to be in contact with Katsuragi-kun.

As a result from that, after one week, Katsuragi-kun finally gave me a reply.

At that time of joy, I almost cried.

Though having a conversation with him may be far off, I’m sure that day will come if I continue to keep him company.

There was also less bullying from Samejima because I wanted to talk with Katsuragi-kun.

I think Nanamin had something to do with it. I’m really thankful.

Longer than a month after that, I finally decided to confess.

The trigger was『Yui-chan passed the first trial』. A few days ago Lily’s congratulatory voice passed on that information. Of course, it seems Hayase-san was informed as well.

I was impatient. The way things were going, Yui-chan would be the first to clear it.

I don’t want something like that. I’m the one that will be next to him.

The blessing in disguise was that since I properly conversed with Katsuragi-kun, there's some extent of affection.

Perhaps Yui-chan also did the same as I am doing to Katsuragi-kun and was given an OK in response. If she was successful after having a worse impression than me, I should succeed as well.

I was enthusiastic, and finally called Katsuragi-kun to the roof.

And now, Katsuragi-kun was standing in front of me.

Now, I told him my feelings.

"I like you! Please go out with me…!" (Shuri)

Contrary to what I thought, I wasn't nervous about telling him how I felt.

Maybe it was because I had told Katsuragi-kun how I felt many times.

"… … …" (Daichi)

Katsuragi-kun stared and didn't say anything.

However, his face distorted little by little. There was no joy, I understood that.

"… Stop bullshitting me…" (Daichi)

He was angry. Right then, anger was spreading across Katsuragi-kun's chest.

He looked at me with hostility. His sharp glare pierced through me.

However, in that moment Katsuragi-kun calmed himself down, taking short breaths.

During that time, I couldn't move an inch.

"… I won't go out with you. I don't like you, and I don't want to." (Daichi)

The response was an obvious rejection.

It echoed through my head, taking a considerable amount of time for me to digest the contents. Still, I didn't give up. My throat was stuck.

"Katsurag-kun. It's… could you tell me why you turned me down?" (Shuri)

I was conceited from talking with him a little. I misunderstood when he came to talk with me a little.

I thought that if I told Katsuragi-kun how I felt, he would surely understand.

I was also pampered, being called cute from those around me and being conceited.

Still, I inferred it from Yui-chan's results from the trial.

And yet, everything was cut in two. I worked hard to smile, giving Samejima's group cold eyes when they looked for Katsuragi-kun.

"… You don't even know something like that." (Daichi)

His facial expression stiffened. His sharply narrowed eyes pierced through me.

"Why, you ask… Unless you understand the reason, it's impossible for me to be around you." (Daichi)

"… …" (Shuri)

"Okay, listen… Imagine a man who has oppressed you up to now says『Go out with me』. I haven't even gotten an apology from you yet. And still you ask for me to『Go out with you』…!" (Daichi)

"… Ah." (Shuri)

With Katsuragi-kun saying that, that thought finally spread through me.

Because I was accustomed to life in Rostalgia, I behaved like this with Katsuragi-kun from the start.

That's right… Katsuragi-kun has a reason to have a grudge against me…

I realized my foolishness.

… Come to think of it, I… Even now, back there, I still haven't apologized to Katsuragi-kun for that…

Despite that he likes me, something like love… I'm so foolish.

… Then maybe, the important thing Nanamin was talking about was an『Apology』.

"Oi." (Daichi)

"… Ah, yes." (Shuri)

"If you're done with what you wanted, can I go back?" (Daichi)

"Y-yeah. Sorry, I've troubled you…" (Shuri)

"It doesn't matter now… Ah, if you really love me, don't go telling anyone about this confession. It would needlessly make them mad." (Daichi)

Announcing that, he left the roof. Only the silence of a miserable woman sobbing in the scarlet evening sun remained.

Story 3-25『Not Number One』

"… … Ah." (Shuri)

The scenery shined brightly and disappeared, a brutal black wall surrounded me.

Again, I've come back to this place.

I failed for the second time.

『… Although I expected as much, you aren't number one, Shuri.』(Lily)

Lily's voice resounded through the space I was at. Her words pierced my chest like an arrow.

"… What do you mean?" (Shuri)

Barely, the words came out of my mouth. They were towards Lily's remark.

"As expected, you say… what do you mean?" (Shuri)

『You do not love Hero-sama, you are taking advantage of Hero-sama's love.』(Lily)

I don't… love Katsuragi-kun?

I'm taking advantage of Katsuragi-kun's love?

I don't understand what she's implying. There was a question mark floating over my head.

Lily saw my appearance, and with a big sigh seemed to be genuinely amazed.

『What do you learn from this trial?』 (Lily)

I looked back on my memories from the trial. It went without saying. She was probably going to say the main cause of my failure.

"I didn't… apologize to Katsuragi-kun." (Shuri)

『That's right. That's taking Hero-sama's love for granted.』(Lily)

"… … … –" (Shuri)

I bit my lips. Because it was as Lily said.

Because I didn't do the thing that, if I liked Katsuragi-kun more than anyone else, should have been done before anyone else.

Because Katsuragi-kun loves me.

Without noticing it, what happened long ago had been vanishing from my mind

However, he would surely remember it crystal clear. He said nothing because he loves me.

I've certainly been taking Katsuragi-kun's love for granted.

『… It seems you've understood.』(Lily)

"Yeah… However, it's absolutely impossible that I don't love him. The feelings I have are real." (Shuri)

『If that's so, answer my question. Alright?』 (Lily)

Lily's voice was provocative.

It's alright. There's no need to be anxious. I mean, I love Katsuragi-kun without a doubt.

『What is Hero-sama's favorite food?』 (Lily)

… … Favorite food?

A question that simplistic was anticlimactic. I immediately looked through my memories, trying to recall him eating.

What kind of food did he want to eat in my memories…

… Huh?

Come to think of it, Katsuragi-kun's favorite food… what is it?

Any time we went to eat he would say it was "delicious", and I was satisfied…

I didn't hear it. I've never heard of something like Katsuragi-kun's favorite food.

Seeing me begin to panic with no responses, Lily began to speak.

『Do you understand? You don't even know such a simple thing. And yet you dare say that you love Hero-sama.』 (Lily)

"Y-you're wrong! Even so, Yui-chan and Hayase-san…!" (Shuri)

Denying how she guessed right, I responded immediately.

The thing I just did was attack another person, a disgusting act.

『Unfortunately… those two know Hero-sama's preference. Fuuko found it out during her trial. Shield seemed to know it from before.』 (Lily)

"No way…" (Shuri)

In other words, two people did the trial better than me.

Yui-chan aside, Hayase-san…?

“… … Ah.” (Shuri)

Then, I realized that she did something that I couldn’t. She apologized.

She diligently confessed her crime.

『Would you like me to tell you? How shield passed the test? 』 (Lily)

“T-that’s not needed.” (Shuri)

『Shield didn’t abandon Hero-sama at the start.』 (Lily)

I abandoned him. It was for the future.

『After that, she opened Hero-sama’s closed mind. Day after day, she endured her pained heart, never giving up. She used common sense on Hero-sama to accomplish it.』 (Lily)

Did I ever think about doing that? I was mistaken to think that I could improve my relationship with Katsuragi-kun just by talking with him.

『Then, in the end she fulfilled Hero-sama’s wished. She had him win against Hero-sama’s hated enemy.』 (Lily)

“T-that’s a lie! You’re lying!” (Shuri)

『Shield passed because it is the truth. Shouldn’t you admit your irresponsibility?』 (Lily)

“W-what are…” (Shuri)

『The Shield, Tamaki Yuina, now deserves to be with him more—』 (Lily)

“—Stop iiiit!!” (Shuri)

I shouted to interrupt her.

My head was confused.

Katsuragi’s smiling face floated away and disappeared like bubbles.

そして、勝手に妄想が描きあげていく最悪の結末。彼の向ける笑顔の先には私じゃなくて――。

Now, my delusions involuntarily came up with the worst conclusion. The one he’s smiling at is not me—

“Ah… ahh…” (Shuri)

I lost my strength, and leaned against the wall.

I, I—

"… What have I been doing up till now…?" (Shuri)

I unconsciously spoke.

The energy that I had for this trial till now—was gone.

◇◆◇◆◇◆◇◆◇◆◇◆◇◆

I was in the Scorching Execution Ground that was not the illusion that Lily created.

"… Well, I wonder if those two are…" (Tamaki)

After successfully passing the two trials I wasn't calm and waited for the other two's results restlessly.

"Well, you'll have to wait a bit longer. Since there's a bit more till they're done." (Lily)

Reacting to my monologue, Lily Shuraham looked at the crystal ball in front of her. She seems to have been monitoring our movements using that. Touching the crystal ball, she could talk to us using that.

As for that… although I defeated her with the crystal stone, she was uninjured.

What she said in the second trial was an outright lie. According to Lily, it would be foolish to wound our valuable war potential.

"What is it? Are you still angry from a while ago?" (Lily)

"… Not particularly. I also didn't want my body to be wounded…" (Tamaki)

"Then, isn't that fine? Besides, that speech was cool." (Lily)

Lily struck a pose, mimicking me in the second trial.

"Because I am the shield that protects him…!" (Lily)

"Aaaaaah! Quit it, you're embarrassing me! Stop it with that look!!" (Tamaki)

I hid my embarrassed face with my hands. It was easy to imagine Lily's grinning face.

"W-what's with these two!? Right now, what are those two feeling!?" (Lily)

"… Ah, those two?" (Tamaki)

Though I the conversation topic switched, I noticed the atmosphere changed.

The reason was definitely Lily.

“One person seems to be slowly clearing the second trial. The other person is… not so good. She’s completely lost her will to fight.” (Lily)

As a result I couldn’t conceal my surprise. One of them was abandoning the Katsuragi LOVE trial.

I’m sure there must be a compelling reason.

“Lost her will to fight… what in the world happened?” (Tamaki)

“… No, it’s just… Because that child was a bit blinded, she misunderstood something for feeling love. She accepted it, and though I wanted her to recover…” (Lily)

“… Lily did what? Isn’t that foul play?” (Tamaki)

“I was going to support her in the end… Did I mistake the timing?” (Lily)

Lily scratched her hairy head.

“… … … …” (Tamaki)

From the way she talked and from her behavior… I have a rough idea who lost their will.

… No, there’s no way…

“Hey… she finished.” (Lily)

As Lily said that, the crystal ball cracked. Dazzling light shot out at that time.

“Kyaa-!?” (Fuuko)

The first to appear was that red-eyed girl, Hayase-san. The girl who rushed out fell on her bottom.

“Good work, Hayase-san.” (Tamaki)

I helped her stand up by pulling her hand. Saying words of appreciation, I tapped her shoulder with a *PonPon*.

“Tamaki-san also did good work.” (Fuuko)

“Then… that means?” (Tamaki)

“Yes! I also passed!” (Fuuko)

Hayase said with a smile. With this, the dropout was decided.

In other words, Shuri-chan…

“… What happened?” (Hayase)

“… … … Ah, no. Nothing.” (Tamaki)

It seems that it showed on my face. Hayase-san, who didn’t know the circumstances, tilted her head to the side. I hesitated and sidestepped by changing the topic.

“Leaving that aside… how did Hayase-san clear it?” (Tamaki)

“Eh? Fufu, well—“ (Fuuko)

Hayase-san smiled at me and told me the method she used to broke through.

“First of all, I confined Katsuragi-kun in his dorm room—“ (Fuuko)

“Yeah, you don’t have to say any more because I get it already! Rather, did you seriously do that!?” (Tamaki)

“Wasn’t it an obvious joke? I, unlike you guys, was already on good terms with Katsuragi-kun and got along with him normally. Ah… it would be good if that was reality… ehe, ehehe…” (Fuuko)

Ah… that’s bad… her consciousness was going on a trip.

I suddenly became tired. Haah, I sighed.

And then, there was another cracking sound from the crystal ball behind us and more light appeared.

Did Shuri-chan finish…? Or…

… Well, even if that was the result, it was just a game so it didn’t matter.

Shuri’s love wasn’t so fragile that it would shake from something like this.

That’s right! I will comfort my best friend!

I turned around thinking that.

“Shuri-chan…?” (Tamaki)

I had an uncomfortable feeling.

Shuri-chan’s pupils showed what she felt.

Her pupils were ominously clouded.

Story 3-26 『Starting Fresh』

Everyone is safe… though it's hard to say for us who just finished the trial, we are going down a gloomy path.

Lily's magic light lead the way with a shining light.

We were lined up behind Lily in the order of me, Shuri-chan, and then Hayase-san.

I was leading Shuri-chan by her hand. Or else she seemed as though she may disappear.

"Shuri-chan…?" (Tamaki)

I called Shuri-chan's name to check on her.

"… … …" (Shuri)

There was no reply. It felt like she was an empty container that lost its soul.

"… … Hmph…" (Lily)

From the related party that did this to her, Lily was giving Shuri-chan a sidelong glance.

Her gaze held astonishment and sympathy.

"… Hey, Lily. Where are we heading?" (Tamaki)

Shuri-chan definitely needs Katsuragi now. If we don't have him, Shuri-chan won't get better.

"… Where is Katsuragi? Since we passed, will you tell us where he is?" (Tamaki)

"… Don't worry, Shield. I've also thought about that." (Lily)

"… What do you mean?" (Tamaki)

"Something like… this!" (Lily)

Lily withdrew from the front and light filled my vision.

What appeared was a transfer magic formation. In the very center of it an unknown man, Katsuragi and Leadred were sitting down.

"Katsuragi! Leadred-san too!" (Tamaki)

『… … …』 (Katsuragi, Leadred)

Though I called their names, they didn't seem to notice that us three arrived, and were staring at something.

"… What are you looking at?" (Tamaki)

I approached quietly and, looking from behind them, saw that they were looking into three crystal balls.

"… Crystal balls? Why are they here?" (Tamaki)

I had doubts about them incongruously being in this place. Lily gave the answer.

"Oh, those, it's because Hero-sama's group was watching them like me." (Lily)

"Oh, I see. Then…" (Tamaki)

… … … Hmm?

Katsuragi was also… watching…?

The trials?

What I had done in the trial rapidly flashed through my mind.

『Therefore… because of that, right now, would you warm me up…?』

Me, who who pleaded for him to embrace me.

『Even if you fail here, it's alright because I will never leave Kasturagi.』

Me, who made a proposal-like remark and clung to him from behind.

『I love you, Katsuragi~… I have… always loved you…!!』

Me, who confessed my love.

"Nnn…" (Tamaki)

"Nnn?" (Lily)

"Noooooooooo!!" (Tamaki)

Sure enough, I wasn't able to endure the shame and screamed.

◇◆◇◆◇◆◇◆◇◆◇◆◇◆

The transfer room. The so-called goal of the dungeon. I ended up here a few hours ago, though I'll be omitting various things that happened for now.

I was busy keeping Tamaki, who let out a loud scream a moment ago, company after bringing her close.

"W-wait a minute! T-then, Katsuragi saw all of our trials?" (Tamaki)

Hearing Lily telling her, Tamaki asked me that question first.

We were certainly watching them at the school, and then fighting Lily.

"… Well, yeah." (Daichi)

"N-no way…" (Tamaki)

Tamaki weakly sat down when I said that. Her face became so red that it wouldn't lose to an octopus, and she was hiding it with her hands.

"Eh, then, everything, you saw, eh, eh!? (Fuuko)

Fuuko started to lose her composure and was becoming flustered. She was also sweating. For some reason she diverted her gaze from me with all her might.

"… … …" (Shuri)

However, the girl who liked me more than anyone—wore a heartless expression.

To be precise, her eyes felt like they had no vitality and appeared dead.

Hell, nightmares, despair, looking at her face like that was painful.

Each of the three had different reactions.

First of all, the one to speak first was Fuuko.

"T-that's not it, Katsuragi-kun! F-from my position, I had no choice but to say… that…" (Fuuko)

"Don't worry about it, Fuuko." (Daichi)

"… … Eh?" (Fuuko)

"Since the reason you did that was because you like me right? I'm not used to being loved. I'm just really happy." (Daichi)

"K-Katsuragi-kun…!" (Fuuko)

Saying that, I clapped Fuuko's shoulder with a *Pon*. She had on an entranced expression. It seems that her consciousness had taking a trip somewhere.

Next I went to the one who did the most in the trial, who was the first girl to return from it.

“… T-Tamaki.” (Daichi)

“… W-what?” (Tamaki)

“Umm…” (Daichi)

“… …” (Tamaki)

I wonder what I should say? Though I had suspected she held good will towards me for a long time, I didn’t think her feelings were that intense until she was put in there.

She is also a gentle child who loves me. I have to respond cordially.

… … … Alright.

“Tama—“ (Daichi)

“Daichi.” (Tamaki)

My name came from her before her name was called. Tamaki whispered into my ear with blushing cheeks. The distance was close enough to feel her breath.

“… Since I’m good for now… Shuri-chan needs you. Help her somehow…” (Tamaki)

Saying just that, Tamaki, as if to encourage me, clapped my back and went besides Leadred.

However, to the simple me it was motivation enough and I turned my feet towards the girl in question.

“… Shuri…” (Daichi)

“Katsuragi… …-kun.” (Shuri)

When Shuri saw my face approaching, she muttered my name.

Apparently she hadn’t noticed me until I approached her.

“… Katsuragi-kun.” (Shuri)

“That’s right, is something wrong?” (Daichi)

“Katsuragi-kun.” (Shuri)

She touched from my arm, to my body and moved her hand up to my cheek.

“Ahaha, it’s Katsuragi-kun. It’s Katsuragi-kun.” (Shuri)

Her clouded eyes saw me.

Something happened to her… it must be related to that trial. Shuri only failed twice, though after that she didn't return to the academy even once.

"Shuri…" (Daichi)

"As I thought… How pleasant, being called by name. I know, can I also… call you by first name? D-Daichi… Ehehe… It's embarrassing. Since I'm not adding '-sama', it's somehow fresh!" (Shuri)

"… …!" (Daichi)

I sense madness.

If those words were Shuri's true feelings, how happy must she be. She seemed so happy she, was going to faint.

However, right now Shuri is going mad. It's abnormal.

"Hey, Daichi. I, was working hard in the trial you know. I even killed Samejima, to save Daichi… But you know, you know, Daichi ran away? Sure, it was because you were embarrassed because you liked me. I mean, Daichi is strong and would never run away from me. I've kissed Daichi time and time again, something… that's happened… Which reminds me how many children shall we have? Of course I want to give birth as proof of my love for Daichi… I want at least three… Daichi can decide the names, I'm not good at things like that. Ah, I've gone off topic… Though I said that, I don't mind. I know Daichi likes me. I like Daichi the most in the world, since I love him. Right? Isn't that right? Say you love me, Daichi? Because I worked hard for that. Say it? Say it, Daichi. Say that you love me…?" (Shuri)

She changed from sorrow to smiling. She was begging and gripping my arm, digging her fingernails into it.

… I know that the words I should say are none other than 『I like you』.

I understand how dangerous her current condition is.

However, I know that if I were to do that, she'd become an empty lifeless doll.

Since we've had a mutually fondness until now, I've been putting off the bill to resolve this and make her better. I wonder if I'm being punished in a sense.

That's why, I must send her the opposite words.

We have to face each other.

"… I hate it." (Daichi)

"… … …" (Shuri)

"The Shuri right now, I hate." (Daichi)

I clearly stare at her eyes and announce it plainly.

“Eh-… Ah-… Uwah-…” (Shuri)

Shuri couldn’t believe the scene in front of her and tried to run away. However, it was kind of easy to predict that. I used『Earth Chain Binding』, seizing her feet.

Shuri lost her balance and hit the ground with her face. I took her hand, and immediately embraced her closely when she got up.

“W-what are—“ (Shuri)

“… But you know. It’s my idiotic self that i hate even more.” (Daichi)

“… …!” (Shuri)

I applied more force to my arms.

“I… when I kissed you back in the first dungeon… that wasn’t because I liked you.” (Daichi)

“… Eh-…” (Shuri)

“I was going to use you and throw you away when you got in the way… I was going to. However, I gradually noticed Shuri’s merits… truly. I came to love that Shuri.” (Daichi)

I don’t know what kind of face Shuri has on. There’s a possibility that she disliked it.

However, I continued.

Because I thought that we need to get to know each other even more now.

“When Shuri confessed to me in front of the Royal Palace I was very happy. I have to protect Shuri, is what I thought. At the same time I became afraid of losing you. I was desperate to not be disliked by Shuri. I didn’t want to show you my ugly side, nor know about it. Therefore, I didn’t tell Shuri how I felt about my past… Sorry, Shuri. I’m the lowest—
“ (Daichi)

“—You’re wrong!!” (Shuri)

Interrupting my apology, Shuri voiced her denial.

“Katsuragi-kun is… that is… I’ve probably been taking advantage of that since the beginning…? Although I was shocked, such a silly me received goodwill, compared to being protected so many times… If it weren’t for Katsuragi-kun, I wouldn’t be here right now. Therefore, Katsuragi-kun isn’t the lowest. I… I’m—“ (Shuri)

Now, sobs were mixing in with her words, and her words firmly reached my heart.

“SOWWYYYYY!!” (Shuri)

It's the first time such a loud voice came from Shuri's mouth. Knowing the extent of her feelings, I could surmise the meaning of her words.

"I also… I also… didn't try to get to know Katsuragi-kun! I became too dependent! On Katsuragi-kun's kindness!" (Shuri)

"… …" (Daichi)

"I was wrong… I was stupid! I fell in love with Katsuragi-kun, and Katsuragi-kun also fell in love with me… I was ecstatic…! I didn't take you into consideration until someone told me!" (Shuri)

"… …" (Daichi)

"You're favorite food, favorite color, favorite hobby… I really don't know anything… While I kept saying that I love you, I didn't even try to meet you halfway! And yet I wanted Katsuragi-kun to love me, I'm such a hopeless idiot…! And above all, I! I ran away from my crime… I'm sorry! Although it is late, for speaking bad about Katsuragi-kun, for the bullying, for not helping you… I'm really sorry!!" (Shuri)

… Shuri continued on with her really, really long apology. I understood the feelings of her words one by one.

… We knew so little of each other. I think we had gotten too drunk on words of 『Love』. We probably longed for each other after having gone through too much shock.

… However, while that's true, my feelings right now aren't temporary, nor are they fake. I seriously love Shuri.

"… Resist if you don't like it." (Daichi)

"… There's no way I would do that." (Shuri)

Now that I had her permission, I embraced her gently.

"Thank you, Shuri. For seriously apologizing…" (Daichi)

"… No, because I was in the wrong." (Shuri)

"Although I don't mind anymore… ah, no. Let's stop this topic already. Let's talk about the future from now on." (Daichi)

"… The future?" (Shuri)

"Yeah, that's right. Talk about the future." (Daichi)

I gently stroked Shuri's head. She seemed comfortable and smiled with her whole face.

I think that she calmed down a little. Therefore, I decided to speak about what I was thinking.

“I love Shuri. Because I love you… once more, shall we try to start over from being friends?” (Daichi)

“… I-I knew it, someone like me…” (Shuri)

Shuri’s shoulders trembled at my words, and she sent me an uneasy look.

“It’s different. Didn’t I tell you already? I love Shuri after all.” (Daichi)

“Then… why?” (Shuri)

Unconciously, I increased the force in my arms. She had truly told me her feelings.

“It’s like Shuri said. Shuri hardly knows me. However, the same can be said for me.” (Daichi)

“… Is that… so?” (Shuri)

“Don’t you agree that I’ve always left it to Shuri took cook, and to pick my clothes, and evaded topics that had to do with the previous world? Therefore, I think that this is a good opportunity to understand each other better. We’ll start properly from scratch, become friends, and deepen our relationship—from there, we’ll move on to love.” (Daichi)

“… I wonder if it will go that smoothly?” (Shuri)

“It will. I mean, we didn’t even know anything about each other, only that we dearly love each other.” (Daichi)

“—“ (Shuri)

“Though it should be obvious already… does Shuri hate me?” (Daichi)

“N-no!” (Shuri)

Shuri shook her head left and right. Because it was done so frantically, I let out a laugh.

“W-why are you laughing!?” (Shuri)

“I couldn’t endure it because Shuri was so cute.” (Daichi)

“C-come on…” (Shuri)

Shuri’s cheeks puffed up. That action was lovely, and from the bottom of my heart I was amazed by her, I knew that I loved her.

“Well then, first of all… That’s right, self-introductions huh.” (Daichi)

I stretched out my hand.

“I’m Katsuragi Daichi. I like reading and playing games.” (Daichi)

“I’m Hamakaze Shuri. My hobby is cooking and my strong point is fried rice! My belief is to always have on a smile! … Nice to meet you!” (Shuri)

Shuri was innocent as usual, and returned my grip with a big smile.

Story 3-27 『To Hell』

On the transfer magic formation, me, Shuri, Shield, Lily, Lily's Husband, and Fuuko sat in a circle.

"The Third Hero Revenge Strategy Meeting!" (Daichi)

When I said the title, everyone clapped in applause. I think it's unusual for a hero to have such hostile private affairs like this.

"Well, however, we should have a self-introduction before that. Lily's Husband." (Daichi)

"Yes." (Lily's Husband)

Lily's Husband raised his hand when I brought it up and began to introduce himself.

"My name is Yuuma Shuraham. As you know, I am Lily Shuraham's husband. —In the world you guys are from, my name was Yuuba Yuuma." (Yuuma)

『… … … Eh?』

Those three solidified.

Oh, that's a good expression. I had a similar reaction when I was first told.

I laughed with a *Kukku*.

"… Umm, t-then that means… that Lily-san's husband is—" (Fuuko)

"Yeah. He's from the same world's inhabitants as you guys, Claria brought him here." (Lily)

Accepting Fuuko's question, Lily clarified his identity. The three's patience was finally unable to last from the truly surprising information that was told to them.

『Huuuh-!?』

They forgot to use words, showing the extent of their shock.

◇◆◇◆◇◆◇◆◇◆◇◆◇◆

It was when the Demon Goddess Messiah-sama and that fucking woman Claria were at the height of competing for this world.

In contrast to Messiah's army of demons, Claria's humans—residents of your world were transferred here and tossed into the battle front as soldiers.

Yuuma and I were included in the soldiers.

You can think that the situation was the same as now. Incidentally, Yuuma and I were lovers back then.

Of course, Yuuma and I were given powers to fight with our lives just like you guys. However, Yuuma was injured on the battlefield, and was on the brink of death.

Therefore, I begged Claria. I begged her to return Yuuma back to the base.

Then, that person said that『We should abandon those have no use』.

My mind blanked.

Hadn't we continuously fought for the sake of this person?

I hated her. I thought to kill her with my own hands. But, I didn't have the strength.

Moreover, we were in the middle of enemy territory.

I couldn't expect any aid.

I despaired. Would I lose my beloved one?

And then I was saved have Messiah-sama. Fortunately Yuuma survived, and I agreed to— well, because of that I have such a body, but above all Yuuma is alive. That much was enough for me.

Because of that, we joined Messiah-sama's faction and were individually sealed here… And now, here we are at the present.

"… And that is why, it's fine… hey, why are you all crying?" (Lily)

Listening to Lily's story, Tamaki, Shuri, and Fuuko were crying.

"B-because…" (—)

"Lily-san's past, it's heart-breaking…" (—)

The three wiped dry their tears with towels they were holding. Lily had an embarrassed expression since she didn't expect this kind of a reaction.

"Oh, therefore, I have no regrets, rather I don't mind because I'm happy being with Yuuma… I don't know what to say, these children… Other than that, listen up! Return to the story, Hero-sama!" (Lily)

Receiving the rough pass from the blushing Lily, I continued the story. Everyone changed their focus to me.

"… Well, I also want to put off hearing it. Time is precious right now." (Daichi)

It was Fuuko that reacted to my words first.

“What do you mean?” (Fuuko)

“Ah, when everyone was undergoing the trial I received help from Yuuma by continuously observing Samejima. Right now, he is fighting against the 30th Floor’s boss in the stairs room… When the boss is defeated, the transfer magic formation that leads to the bottom floor will appear. Even though I’ve already called this a strategy meeting… you understand right?” (Daichi) [TN: Samejima is read as “Trash”]

Although no one responded to my question, by their expressions and gestures, they’ve responded properly.

One gave a smile, one gave a shrug, one nodded, and another licked their lips.

“Yuuma and I are prepared for the worst case scenario… Besides, Hero-sama also has personal affairs to attend to.” (Lily)

“Don’t worry. Enjoy your marriage, it’s been a while.” (Daichi)

“I’ll do just that.” (Lily)

Lily threw her arms around Yuuma and said so. Showing off, this fellow.

Me too… that’s right. I have much to do after this fight.

The matter with Shuri, the future with Tamaki, and dealing Fuuko.

All of it, all of it. I will give it my all.

… Well, here we go.

“—Shall we go and hunt a Hero?” (Daichi)

For a long time, I’ve been watching this revenge play out in my dreams.

◇◆◇◆◇◆◇◆◇◆◇◆◇◆◇

“… What’s that magic formation…?” (Samejima)

I was perplexed by seeing the pattern I’ve never seen before after defeating the monster I thought was the boss. The one in【Rigal’s Den】wasn’t like this.

Sajima approached the magic formation as if she had an inkling and nodded with a “hmm, hmm” as if she had confirmed something, but that too came to an end and she came back to us who had safely defeated the boss and were resting.

“Did you figure something out?” (Kijima)

Next to her, Kijima asked with his breath rising. Sajima smiled and laughed.

“It’s a transfer magic formation. Exactly like the one I saw in the book from the Royal Palace. Since there aren’t anything like stairs here, I wonder if it brings us down?” (Sajima)

“It’s possible this isn’t the stairs room?” (Kijima)

“I think it isn’t. I mean, the opponent was only that strong.” (Sajima)

“That’s also right…” (Kijima)

Kijima nodded, convinced.

The boss we were fighting until a moment ago excelled in swordplay. We somehow managed to attack it simultaneously, and were able to finally kill it.

“It would have been troublesome if it could recover.” (Kijima)

“Something like that wouldn’t happen. If it’s Hero-sama, it’ll be alright.” (Arianne)

Arianne objected to Kijima. Although this person has been supporting me, recently she’s been clinging to me and has been noisy.

Once I capture this dungeon it’s goodbye. On that topic, Selen has been easy because she’s reserved and I’ll continue to advance my relationship with her.

I’ll cast away unnecessary people. It is the natural right of those who stand above others.

After that a few minutes passed as we checked our status and had a strategy meeting.

“… We’ll go soon ‘kay?” (Samejima)

I called out to each member and set up ranks and preparing weapons. Of course, I was in the lead position.

The magic formation was in front of me. I don’t know what awaits us after passing through it.

However, it is possible to predict it to some degree after hearing Sajima’s story. In the worst case situation, there would be a demon king, but that should not be a problem if we face it with caution.

More than anything… I want to have my wish granted quickly.

No matter who I have to sacrifice.

Even if it’s another classmate.

Phew, letting out a single breath, with sword in hand, and magic already prepared for the enemy.

“… Alright, let’s go then, you guys!! Let’s kill the demon king!” (Samejima)

『Yeah!!』

We jumped into the magic formation and shouted the usual cheer.

We didn’t know that it was connected to the hell that contained the revenge of the demon king.

Story 3-28『Revenge』

“O…kay!” (Samejima)

We arrived in a simple room after passing through the transfer magic formation. The ocher walls monotonously wrapped around us. Though unlike the room before this, it is strangely bright.

That was my first impression.

“No wa-!?” (—)

“Kya-“ (—)

“Hya-“ (—)

“…Mu-“ (—)

Judging from the voices, everyone is safe from the transfer.

“You don’t have time to fall on your backsides. Straighten yourselv—” (Samejima)

Everyone began reacting to me getting them into formation—before a familiar voice interrupted.

“Ah! Nanami~n!!” (Tamaki)

“—Eh?” (Sajima)

Sajima suddenly saw the person who called her. Everyone’s eyes, including mine, were caught by the girl over there.

It was an unexpected person. An acquaintance. It was the class chairman, Tamaki, waiving her hand.

… Why is that person here? Tamaki should be capturing the【Labyrinth of the Sleeping Trance】, different from us.

… No way, has she already finished it? In that case is Hayase here with Umahara and Minamoto?

Sajima had a personality that would not doubt her close friend and ran over to Tamaki’s position.

“Yui-cha~n!” (Nanami)

“Nanami~n!” (Tamaki)

They embraced each other in tears. Tamaki was the same as always.

“Nanamin, are you alright?” (Tamaki)

“Yeah. Yui-chan though, why are you here?” (Nanami)

“Even I don’t know. While we were looking for the dungeon’s traps… although we knew it was a magic formation, we were caught in it, and everyone was scattered apart… I was so lo~nely!” (Tamaki)

Her story made sense. Maybe I suspected too much.

Seeing the two like that put me at ease, and Kijima also joined in on the conversation.

However, were caught off guard. Both Kijima and I. We didn’t notice at all.

“… … Goho-… …?” (Kijima)

An ice spear protruded from Kijima’s body. Tamaki had on a fake smile and muttered.

“That guy is first huh…” (Tamaki)

“—Sajima! Hurry to Kijima!” (Samejima)

I called to get her back immediately, but she had already fainted. There was a woman with crimson eyes next to her with her hand used like a sword.

I saw a man appear from the interior glaring at us with white eyes, and unlike a moment ago his face bloomed with a smile.

“As told, we neutralized them!” (—)

“Thank you, good work.” (—)

“I-it was nothing…” (—)

When the man stroked her head, her face melted in happiness.

The man looked at Kijima collapsed at his feet, still penetrated by the ice spear, and lifted the corners of his mouth in a smile.

I realized it.

“Now, the stage is set. Let’s raise the curtain—on the once in a lifetime, Big Revenge Play.” (—)

This guy is truly the demon king.

◇◆◇◆◇◆◇◆◇◆◇◆◇◆

I laughed loudly in my heart. It was due to Samejima’s stiffened face.

He did not have his usual composure of looking down on others. Right now, he was probably feeling danger to his life for the first time ever.

I looked down on him to the point that he was frightened. Though only my outward appearance had changed.

It couldn't be helped that my laughter didn't stop. However, this wasn't the time to be immersed in memories.

"Tamaki, Leadred. Each of you capture a small fry. Don't kill them. I don't mind if you punish them so much that they wish to die, though. Fuuko, bind Kijima with your magic. If he puts up resistance, it's fine to erase him. Shuri… let's beat this guy into despair." (Daichi)

Informing each of them with the strategy beforehand, they began to move immediately.

"Tch-. Arianne, Selen! Scatter! Crush them!" (Samejima)

"Got it!" "Understood!"

Samejima issued opposing instructions.

That guy's an idiot. He overestimated his ability and thought it was better than ours.

Leadred went to the Pink Hair, Tamaki the Chibi. It's probably impossible that those two would lose to them.

They were reliable.

I can be at ease focus on killing this guy.

"… I have to congratulate you for being my opponent, Samejima." (Daichi)

When I called out his name, Samejima's caution increased further. Shock mixed with fear on his face.

"How do you know my name!?" (Samejima)

"Isn't it because you killed us?" (Shuri)

All of a sudden, Shuri made an appearance from behind me.

"H-H-Hamakaze? It's a lie, Hamakaze died!" (Samejima)

"Yeah, that's right. I was discarded and killed, by you." (Shuri)

"I-if that's the case! You're a fake! Damnit! All of this, is it a trap roo-!?" (Samejima)

Samejima tried to escape from the crime and reality so I struck his cheek hard.

He was blown away at an incredible speed, and hit the wall in the blink of an eye.

“Face reality, idiot.” (Daichi)

Shuri approached Samejima and crouched near him. She pulled his hair and, again, pushed his face into the wall.

“Gobobe-…!” (Samejima)

“… Well then, you’re going to need plastic surgery for your face now… Should I tell you our true identity now? Because you grumbled something about Shuri being a fake, let’s sear this into your memory. Open.” (Daichi)

The letters spelling out Katsuragi Daichi were definitely there. Under that was also Hamakaze Shuri, and Tamaki Yuina who this guy knew the name of, in a row.

Samejima’s eyes opened wide. His mouth opened and closed when he looked at me.

I returned it with as brutal a smile as possible.

“You’re… that Katsurag-!!” (Samejima)

I hit his face again. It felt like I broke his nose.

“Do you think that way of speaking is ok? Don’t you understand your situation?” (Daichi)

“… Don’t fuck with me, I can win against garbage like you. Starlight—“ (Samejima)

“Do you think I’d let you do something like that?” (Shuri)

Shuri kicked his jaw up. Samejima’s chant was interrupted, and naturally the magic was not activated.

“… It’s not necessary for you to learn the difference in our strength from only one bout… Taste my power now.” (Daichi)

Hit, hit, hit, hit, hit, hit, hit, hit, hit, hit, hit, hit, hit, hit, hit, hit, hit, hit, hit, hit.

I punched Samejima’s face, condensed into an interval of one minute.

“Higi-!?” (Samejima)

Every time I raised my fist, Samejima’s face distorted in fear. It excited my sadistic heart.

“Isn’t it very pleasant? Since we are at it, let’s try having you making me enjoy it even more.” (Daichi)

I grabbed his head, and banged it against the ground. So that he wouldn’t be able to run away, Shuri pierced Samejima’s foot with her dagger.

“Aaaaaaaaaah!!” (Samejima)

“Shut up.” (Daichi)

“Fugu-!?” (Samejima)

I kneed his stomach to silence him.

“… So, trash. Can you say the same thing even in this situation?” (Daichi)

“… M-my comrades will…” (Samejima)

Speaking his last hope with a feeble voice, of course I hadn’t overlooked them.

“Then, should I show you? What happened to the comrades you mentioned?” (Daichi)

I forcibly raised his head to look at the scene that was unfolding.

“Ah… ah…” (Samejima)

Kijima was sewn to the ground in earth chains, Pink Hair had a katana affixed to the base of her neck, and the one in light blue clothes had a knife fixed to her sleeve so that she couldn’t run away.

It seems that she was still conscious, but her clothes were tattered. Her body was injured all over.

She had on a dark expression from the pits of despair, as though she accepted her death. Therefore, I thought that I’d give her a little bit of hope. Even though I said that, it’s only a woman.

“Shuri, switch spots with me.” (Daichi)

“Ok~ay.” (Shuri)

Samejima watched Shuri as I went over to the collapsed people.

“… Oi.” (Daichi)

When I let out the low voice, the girls let out a “Hiii”. When I drew Pink Hair’s jaw towards me, I presented her with an offer. [TN: Not ‘hi’. Strong ‘e’]

“You, name?” (Daichi)

“A-Arianne…” (Arianne)

“And that one over there?” (Daichi)

“S-Selen…” (Arianne)

“Is that so, is that so. Then, Arriane and Selen. I’ll give you a chance to live.” (Daichi)

“”!?”” (Arianne, Selen)

As soon as I said that with a smile, their eyes clearly sparkled.

“I-is that true!?” (Arianne)

“Yeah, I don’t lie. However, there is a condition.” (Daichi)

“What is it!? I’ll do anything!!” (Arianne)

“P-please tell us!” (Selen)

As though her attitude from the journey was a lie, she accepted the proposal. Selen also agreed.

“Alright, that’s a good girl. You’re already mine. Therefore, make that trash hero feel pain to your heart’s content. Sound good?” (Daichi)

“Y-yes!” (Arianne)

“… Alright.” (Selen)

Arianne and Selen didn’t hesitate. When I had Leadred and Tamaki release the bindings on those two, I brought them to where Samejima was.

“Y-you guys… y-you’re kidding—“ (Samejima)

“… So noisy.” (Selen)

Selen got the ball rolling. She kicked Samejima’s crotch. From there, they let out violence along with abusive language one by one.

『Womanizer!!』

『Lewd!!』

『Tiny dick!!』

『Premature ejaculator!!』

They let out many unbearable words. They broke Samejima’s confidence.

What remained of that guy’s support broke rapidly.

“Hey, look at that, Samejima. These are who you called comrades. No… I wonder if ‘chess pieces’ is more accurate? There’s no difference to you anyways. Were you going to use them and throw them away as well?” (Daichi)

“S-something like that…” (Samejima)

This trash hero seems to have broken mentally and lost his composure, I took his reaction as acknowledgement.

“Did I hit the mark?… Well, after this we can say that there isn’t anyone softhearted enough to save you, but… you reap what you sow!” (Daichi)

I kicked Samejima up so that he could see me place my hands on the hips of these two beautiful women.

They easily entrusted their bodies to me and their faces became lewd.

“Aah.. Aaah…” (Samejima)

It seems that a soundless voice came out.

“Disciplining women is unacceptable, you are trash indeed. This is more suitable for you than a woman!” (Daichi)

“Gi-!!” (Samejima)

I held his head down, striking it against the floor many times. Then, I stamped directly on his foot with all of my strength.

“I wonder if I can also scold you like this. I’ll let you kiss the floor in thanks.” (Daichi)

“S-stop it…” (Samejima)

“I see, I see. You want more.” (Daichi)

I strengthened the force on his leg.

“Aaaaaaaaaaaaaaah!!” (Samejima)

Samejima’s scream echoed through the room.

“Shut up, you pig. Quiet down for a bit. Tamaki, lend me a knife.” (Daichi)

“It can’t be helped… here.” (Tamaki)

Tamaki threw six knifes in total. Two each to the shoulders, back, and thighs.

“O-ow! S-stop alre—“ (Samejima)

“Tamaki, add another ten.” (Daichi)

“Can I have a present afterward? Because I’m also running low.” (Tamaki)

“I got it. Go, pig.” (Daichi)

He was stabbed by Tamaki's additions one by one, each loaded thoroughly with hatred. Samejima already started convulsing, and he was leaking urine.

He was too pathetic, so I temporarily crouched down and paid my respects.

"Hahaha! That's a good expression!" (Daichi)

I scoffed and laughed from the bottom of my stomach.

Skin that has been riddled with cuts. A broken nose, a collapsed cheek, drooping eyelids, and lips that were swelling purple and blue.

There were no traces of his original face.

"P-plea… stop…" (Samejima)

"… Did you stop when I said that? Even once!?" (Daichi)

"I-I won't do id eber agaib! Pleaze furgib be!!" (Samejima)

"Don't you understand that it's too late to say that? You will have the same fate as that guy.—Leadred, kill him." (Daichi)

"My pleasure." (Leadred)

"Eh?" (Kijima)

That became Kijima's last word.

The red oni's katana swung down on his neck. The body that lost its head spouted blood. The head fell down in the pool of blood with a *Guchari*.

"That guy's end was disappointing. He was an accessory, after all… just an accessory… Hey, trash… your turn." (Daichi)

Samejima watched, his whole body trembling and shaking. His complexion was lost, becoming pale and he began to cry.

"Don't wanna don't wanna don't wanna!! Don't wanna die! Help meeee!!" (Samejima)

He collapsed on the spot, exposing and ugly crying face. Five piercing gazes pierced through him.

"I'b do anyfing you wabt!! Please save me!! Begging you!!" (Samejima)

He had a hilarious expression on while he begged, so I decided to put on an act, and held out my toes towards him.

"Lick these within ten seconds. To be honest, I don't want to even breathe the same air as you—but, I'll permit you to." (Daichi)

“N-no way—“ (Samejima)

“You don’t have time to spare. Eight, seven, six, five—“ (Daichi)

“—I’ll lick them! Please let me lick them!” (Samejima)

With five seconds left, Samejima lowered his head and extended his tongue towards my shoe at full speed.

He began to lick my shoes that were entirely covered in dirt.

… That, that Samejima had completely given in. His pride, his decency, completely cast aside, to the extent that he prostrated himself at my insults.

Disgracefully begging for his life.

Like this, is it also pleasant?

Going to that school, thinking that I would rather die for a year.

Bullying. I was, right now, returning it like this to its ringleader.

I made him kneel.

How long have I waited to see this day come!

… It’s about time to end this.

“Oi, trash. That’s enough.” (Daichi)

“T-then!” (Samejima)

“Yeah, it’s over.—Your life, that is.” (Daichi)

“—E-eh?” (Samejima)

With his hopes dashed, a shadow came over his face.

I drew the sword from my waist and crouched down, piercing Samejima’s back.

“Eh, ah, it hurts it hurts it hurts it hurts it hurts it hurts it hurts it hurts it hurts!!” (Samejima)

“This is for all you’ve done until now.” (Daichi)

I pulled it out without hesitation and blood vigorously gushed out. Ignoring the surroundings, I severed both arms that were touching the ground.

“O-aguwaaaaaah!?” (Samejima)

“This is for Shuri who suffered because of you.” (Daichi)

Samejima was now only screaming and was unable use recognizable words.

Soon his consciousness would fade.

However, he is absolutely not allowed to die from pain.

I will give him a true death penalty.

“Agaaaauwaaah…!” (Samejima)

Samejima had lost his support and could do nothing but grovel on the ground. While I looked down on such a person, I raised my sword.

“And now, to atone for the sins you have committed—retribution.” (Daichi)

Swinging down the sword without hesitation towards the criminal’s neck for a certain kill, I performed the execution.

The face distorted from pain and suffering, full of despair, flew through the air.

Story 3-Last 『Scorching Execution Ground』

『… Damnit, damnit, damnit!! 』 (Samejima)

I cursed and cursed the events that happened until just before dying, scared of the death coming afterwards.

It was stuck in my mind.

The scene of death and pain were linked to me even now.

Piercing through, like gouged meat.

『… Gu-…. Ah…! Hah, hah…!!』(Samejima)

Katsuragi Daichi…!

I was made to do humiliating acts by the guy I bullied in school.

Made to lick his shoes, taking my life in the end.

Do I yield? Impossible.

I am nobler than anyone else, a person to rule others. However, at that time, I bowed down for my valuable life.

Thinking about it annoys me.

Fucking behaving like that…!

Arianne and Selen as well. Giving in to Katsuragi so fucking easily!

Kill him, kill him, kill him, kill him, kill him!

“I’ll absolutely kill that guy!!” (Samejima)

Normally, a loud voice would usually come out.

Why? I was killed by that trash.

My limbs moved. Also, my view was filled with light.

I felt a little uneasy… however, I don’t give a damn right now.

Claria probably resurrected me. Yeah. She’s a god. I’m a hero. She’d be troubled if I weren’t here. It must be like that.

I’m definitely alive.

If it’s like this I can kill that guy…!

“Just wait, Katsuragi…! I’ll definitely kill you…!” (Samejima)

“You haven’t reflected at all? Die.” (—)

“—Hahi-“ (Samejima)

The moment I heard that detestable guy’s voice, I felt something cut into my head and my vision went pitch black.

◇◆◇◆◇◆◇◆◇◆◇◆◇◆

“… Killing that guy makes me feel refreshed no matter how many times I kill him after all…” (Daichi)

While I wiped away the blood that was stuck to my sword, I described the thoughts I had looking at the corpse split in two at my feet.

“Well, Katsuragi-sama! That was splendidly done!” (Arianne)

Arriane openly gave me a compliment. Although it didn’t feel bad to be praised, for me she had the position of a Slut.

Since my trust in her is low it’ll probably be necessary to turn her into a slave as well. After Samejima’s execution is finished.

We’re in the bottom room. In other words, we were still in the same place where Samejima was killed.

Lily and Yuuma are with us now as well. Knowing the position of the two hero parties, there was no harm since they wouldn’t pursue this far in.

I asked Shuri and Fuuko to watch Sajima.

“I guess that it was natural that she would come… Then, what now? Explode him next?” (Tamaki)

Lined up next to me, Tamaki proposed the next method to execute Samejima.

She took useless crystal stone out of her bag.

“… I see. Let’s go with that.” (Daichi)

Understanding her intention, I cast the spell to revive Samejima for the second time using the power of『Wight King』.

“To thou, this one now grants a new life. A second life is bestowed. Pledge your oath, and devote one’s self. 『Wight Back』” (Daichi)

Light began to converge and began regenerating the body. Although I've taken revenge on Samejima with all my strength once, unfortunately just that much did not settle my anger.

So I figured that I'd revive him as a slave and do it again.

At first I thought to make him live his life as low class trash, but since levels go up naturally, he would be able to attack everyone other than me. Though don't think he would stand a chance when ability is considered, there was a chance.

Besides, leaving Claria's favorite person close at hand would just be an uneasy factor.

First of all, since just looking as his face is revolting, I dismissed the idea. Above all, the opposition from the girls was amazing.

"Tamaki. Since the meat scattering around would be troubling, surround him with a wall of ice after he eats this." (Daichi)

"Roger. Here, the crystal stone… Ah, he's reviving." (Tamaki)

"Yeah, then shall we begin?" (Daichi)

I stamped down on the fallen Samejima. Just after reviving and regaining consciousness, Samejima immediately felt pain from the shock and let out a panicked voice.

"K-Katsuragi? Why are you… still here?" (Samejima)

"Because I decided to revive you." (Daichi)

"Ha-!? You can do something like—mugu-!?" (Samejima)

Since his reaction was bothersome again, I closed his mouth after putting a crystal stone into it.

"Understand now? Your life is in my hands. I can kill you at any time. From now on I'll be enjoying the taste of your fear (full course) to my heart's content." (Daichi)

I plainly explained the crystal stone. At the same time, Tamaki jumped back after isolating him in a private room of ice.

"T-take it out! Please take it out!?" (Samejima)

He frantically beat on the ice wall with a cramped look of fear. Immediately after that, that guy's body burst into pieces.

The walls of ice were covered in blood.

Chunks of meat were spread all round.

Shuri's group had taken refuge over there. Those girls would not be able to endure this.

Tamaki was amazing for taking that into consideration.

She now had a calm face and collected the pieces of meat together with the ice walls.

“… What? You’re staring.” (Tamaki)

“… No, it’s just that Tamaki is cute and praiseworthy.” (Daichi)

“I-… if I’m going to be Katsuragi’s wife, this much is natural…” (Tamaki)

“… May I embrace you, Tamaki-san?” (Daichi) [TN: Woah. ‘-san’.]

“I-idiot! … When we leave the dungeon.” (Tamaki)

Tamaki started to fiddle with her hair busily, purposely looking away.

What is this cute thing?

However, it’s as she said.

I revived Samejima to execute him again.

“Hee-!? S-stop it!! I-I was wrong!” (Samejima)

To Samejima, with the memory of his death still fresh, it seemed that just seeing my face caused a rejection response.

Though I hadn’t done anything yet, his face was sloppy with tears and mucus. Without resisting, he prostrated himself. [TN: Dogeza]

I just smiled as usual and stuffed his mouth full on Yanu Leafs.

A large quantity of toxins would spread through the body, eating him from the inside out.

“Ah… no-, baba… ba…” (Samejima) [TN: Gurgling.]

Samejima writhed in agony and fainted, exhausted with bubbles foaming from his mouth.

I repeated the revival and killing after that.

“Ah… please… sto-“ (Samejima)

I strangled him with an earth chain.

“I’m sorry I’m sorry I’m sor—gapo-!?” (Samejima)

I drowned him using water magic.

“It hurts, please forgive me and stop i—!!” (Samejima)

I used a layer of soil like a vice to crush him to death.

“I don’t… don’t wanna die…” (Samejima)

I killed him with Berserk Tempest.

“S-stop! Stop it stop it stop it stop it—eh-” (Samejima)

I ordered him to commit suicide.

Samejima’s mind was already wearing out, his eyes had become unfocused.

His mouth was half open, but when I approached his body trembled, and he began crying and repenting.

“I’m sorry I’m sorry I’m sorry I’m sorry I’m sorry.” (Samejima)

“Even if you apologize how much of it is true? Next is… to experience the same thing as me. Lily, Yuuma.” (Daichi)

“Yes.” (Lily)

“Leave it to the adults.” (Yuuma)

The two snapped their fingers and Samejima was surrounded with multiple layers of expanding magic formations. When the light burst open, the master of the bottom floor’s demons (servants) suddenly appeared.

“Eh… ah… aah…!” (Samejima)

Of course, I ordered him so that he couldn’t counterattack.

“Guooaaaru!”

The ferocious beasts saw the feast in front of it and drooled a lot.

They couldn’t wait.

They wanted to have it soon.

They wanted to eat.

Those instincts weren’t suppressed and were displayed.

Therefore, I released them.

“Kill him, you guys.” (Daichi)

As though that were the trigger, the beasts tore off of him with their fangs, biting their prey.

“Aaaaaah! Uaauoah!?” (Samejima)

His arms were stretched and he screamed.

It was immediately bitten off, and his voice became tiny.

Bicha, *Guchari*, *BichaBicha*!!

Only chewing sounds were heard.

I revived Samejima again after confirming his death on the status screen.

And then, he became food again.

“Eeyaaauo!?” (Samejima)

Revive him. Become food.

“Ow, owowowow-!!” (Samejima)

Revive. Eaten.

“Death… no… aaaah…” (Samejima)

Revive.

Samejima alone experienced falling into the depths of endlessly being killed.

Let’s make the end of this performance appropriate to this dungeon’s name.

“Earth Layer. Earth Chain Binding.” (Daichi)

Earth chains manifested and fastened to the ground.

I approached, piercing his empty stomach with my sword. I twisted it and punctured the soil layer, boring through the meat and firmly fixing him to the ground like a screw.

“I’m sorry, forgive me because the pain I inflicted on you was wrong please please forgive me.” (Samejima)

“… … …” (Daichi)

I ignored him and continued working. Samejima began to sob.

Do you think you’ll be forgiven by crying?

If it’s like that, I too did cry. Instead of enduring it, I bared my feelings.

Even so, do you, the one who more than anyone else wouldn’t allow me to do that, think that that will help…?

Letting the anger boil and flow out, I began chanting.

“Emperor of Flame. Thou, judge this criminal who committed an evil unto the throne.” (Daichi)

A large amount of magic was poured into the Emperor-class fire magic I heard from Fuuko earlier.

“Burn tremendously, Six Flame Pillars. Intensify and burn all as a wick. Leaving nothing behind that proves there was once life!” (Daichi)

“… Ah… Ah… Ah… Ah.” (Samejima)

With his mind broken into pieces, Samejima who had lost his ego was unable to speak, and was constantly muttering incoherently.

“… This is your true end. Atone and be burned in the fire of hell. –Suicide of Ashes and Dust.” (Daichi)

In that moment, Samejima was surrounded by six flaming pillars and crucified. Before long they united to become one, consuming Samejima.

This scene expresses represents this place the most. It’s exactly a【Scorching Execution Ground】.

His body was carved as he let out agonizing cries. No relief was given. His pain and agony ignored.

“Die and… suffer the pain of death.” (Daichi)

A cry of sorrow echoed.

After making sure he had burned to death, we left.

My revenge is complete.

Story 3-Another 2『Repeated Feelings』

The open, overflowing night sky continued on endlessly. The stars sparkled, and pale moonlight shined on the world. I felt the rustling of the gentle wind across my whole body.

This is definitely outside of the dungeon.

"… Alright, is everyone safe?" (Daichi)

I, who with this have been transferred three times, checked on the safety of my nearby comrades.

"T-that… was my first dungeon clear." (Arianne)

The first to respond was the Slut. That's not it. I wasn't asking you.

"Nothing for me. Everyone else?" (Tamaki)

"Nothing is wrong for me as well." (Leadred)

One by one they announced their safety and for now I was relieved. It seems that the transfer was successful.

"Is Katsuragi-kun also unhurt?" (Fuuko)

"Yeah, there's no problem." (Daichi)

After finishing taking revenge on Samejima, we separated into two groups.

The group that returned to the surface and the group that stayed in the dungeon.

Since we couldn't take the executed Samejima and sleeping Sajima along, we had to bring the Slut to the surface.

So I sorted the best selection of personnel into two groups… Five people, including me, were in the surface group.

Tamaki, Fuuko, and Leadred. Arianne was here as an extra.

Though I wanted the two people who were Sajima's best friends to stay behind and care for her, Lily pushed me into taking Tamaki along. Although Shuri was a probably a little dissatisfied, I wanted to have a small talk with her, just us two without being crowded.

The official reason was that I didn't want to carry the baggage myself, I decided that was good enough.

"Well, being outside after a long time is nice!" (Leadred)

Leadred stretched out her arms to loosen her muscles. She seemed to be bored since she hardly did anything this time.

She'll definitely have a chance to run wild according to the plan, so she'll have to endure for now.

… Well.

"Now then, we'll be behaving different from here on." (Daichi)

Saying that, I split the surface groups further.

Tamaki and I will go to Russell, to retrieve Miare and the luggage left at the inn. Fuuko, Leadred, and Arianne will go to the walled city Gandarosu, with the purpose of buying a house to use as a base.

Numerous demons joined my party, so I decided that I'd passed the limit of concealing them in an inn. Besides, it is unlikely that diving into the next dungeon will be like this one.

So I decided to have Miare also join the party as a safety measure for that.

So, the team was organized with Arianne as the native, Fuuko as the intellectual, and Leadred as the guard.

"I also wanted to go with Katsuragi-kun…" (Fuuko)

Fuuko glued to my body and asked with an upturned gaze.

"Sorry, Fuuko. Because today there is something I have to talk about with Tamaki." (Daichi)

"Yeah, I understand. I just want to say… Sometimes, look at me too please?" (Fuuko)

"… Understood." (Daichi)

Fuuko smiled and went back to Leadred after I said so. The Trash Slut also had something to say but we pretended to not hear her and started to depart for our separate destinations.

After exiting the dungeon, we safely arrived in Russell and had returned to the Inn. We got in contact with Miare at the guild information desk and were to meet with her tomorrow morning.

So, here's the problem. Silence pervaded since we half-understood each other's feelings. It was going good until we sat side by side on the bed. However, we didn't move after that.

I took a fleeting glance at Tamaki, I was nervous and unable to calm down, though having said that I didn't attempt to return to my room. Like that, I was also unable to bring up a subject to talk with her about.

Not only that, my body was filled with a sensation that I was not used to. It was restlessness.

Even the usual retorts came to an end. My mind was blank, and as soon as I calmed down to speak the words would vanish. And now, I've missed the timing.

I wonder what I should say in this kind of a situation.

In such an awkward atmosphere, Tamaki murmured.

“Can I call you… Daichi?” (Tamaki)

Even though I was cornered by the sudden request, I agreed.

Since it wasn’t as sudden as I thought.

“Then… I’ll also use Yuina.” (Daichi)

“O-okay… Daichi.” (Tamaki)

“Y-yeah…” (Daichi)

“… …” (Tamaki)

“… … …” (Daichi)

『… … … … …』

The silence returned.

I didn’t think this would be so embarrassing. Since I could talk with Shuri without pausing, I couldn’t consciously bring up a topic like this.

“… D-Daichi.” (Tamaki)

“W-what?” (Daichi)

“U-umm, it’s… actually, since Lily wore me out, tonight… she said to enjoy tonight slowly… s-so…” (Tamaki)

The ending was weak, and Yuina’s voice was barely audible.

However, I earnestly listened to her and understood what she wanted to say. Therefore, Yuina probably wanted me to say it. Since it’s embarrassing.

It would be tasteless to have her say any more. If you understand, show your intentions through your actions.

“Ah…” (Tamaki)

I took Yuina’s hand who was next to me and grasped it tightly. It was nice and cool, a good feeling.

“Then… is it okay, Yuina?” (Daichi)

“Y-yeah… Because I’ve already decided. I want to smile next to Daichi.” (Tamaki)

“… I also want to see Yuina’s smiling face. I want to monopolize all of you.” (Daichi)

“——!!” (Tamaki)

Yuina blushed from ear to ear in the blink of an eye.

It’s a reaction I’ve seen many times, but it’s still cute.

“Sh-… should I take that… as a proposal?” (Tamaki)

“… Is it a good proposal this time?” (Daichi)

“… Should it be a secret again?” (Tamaki)

“… No.” (Daichi)

A replay of some time ago. We both concealed it at the time.

However, this time is different.

I saw that trial, I’m aware of her heart, of her resolution. I wouldn’t have a foolish idea like leaving her.

I wish that we… could spend our lives together.

I couldn’t hold back my feelings for her any longer. I absolutely want to make this woman happy by my hand.

Right, I feel that from the bottom of my heart.

I will convey my feelings.

“I love Yuina.” (Daichi)

I said that and Yuina burst into tears with a happy expression, she wiped away the tears from the corners of her eyes, and finally hid her face with her hands. I would probably have the same reaction if I were in her position.

It was really amusing. Therefore, I decided to make fun of her.

“Yuina… I gathered my courage to confess but what’s your answer?” (Daichi)

“I-I know that but…!” (Tamaki)

I stared at Yuina from the distance of a finger. I wasn’t afraid at all. In fact, my feelings increased.

“… However, I haven’t heard it firsthand. I only heard it from in the trial.” (Daichi)

“B-because of that you can endure. I’ll die from shame if I say it twice.” (Tamaki)

“I still want to hear it from your mouth.” (Daichi)

“… It’s no good if I don’t say it?” (Tamaki)

I selfishly shook my head at her question. Yuina gathered her determination and turned towards me, unintentionally letting out an “Uwah” at the distance between us.

And then, the feelings she held in her chest were conveyed.

“… I am also… in love with Daichi…” (Tamaki)

They were simple words, but they firmly held one’s irreplaceable pure feelings. I was embarrassed from having her say them, and my temperature suddenly increased.

The returned feelings blew away all words, and my body moved on impulse, embracing Yuina. She also accepted it without disliking it, unlike what I felt back at that time.

“… Love. I love Daichi.” (Tamaki)

“I love Yuina.” (Daichi)

“Do you love… Shuri-chan more than me?” (Tamaki)

The sudden question put me at a loss for words as I compared the two. Yuina laughed from seeing my face and clapped my back without holding back.

“It’s a joke. I know how important that girl is to you. However, could you cherish me the same?” (Tamaki)

“… I promise, even if it costs my life.” (Daichi)

“Th-… then, it’s fine.” (Tamaki)

Yuina embraced me strongly. The usual Yuina would probably have stopped here. However, it is different now. She continued with more words. Our relationship advanced one step further.

However, today… please give me a lot of Daichi’s love.” (Tamaki)

The second she said that, Yuina closed her eyes. What she wanted to do, of course I understood. Or rather, I don’t think there is a guy who would have the self-control to not.

I brought my face near Yuina’s face that was dyed red—and pushed her body covered with pure white skin down, hanging over her.

Story 3-Another 3 『Vessel』

The intense contest with Yuina continued till daybreak. Although I was a little surprised at how much she knew despite her naivete, there was still a difference in experience. I'd taken the lead.

I became increasingly aware of my greed for Yuina's innocent reactions and her seductive voice, to the point that she scolded me. Even so, we continued until the end.

Because her scolding was adorable.

It was about then that Yuina said it was a good time to rinse off and enter the bath. I also agreed with her since the sweat felt unpleasant. However, I let her go in first on the principle of ladies first.

When I said, "I'll wait for you to finish." She responded with, "What are you talking about? Aren't we going in together?" So now we're both in the bathroom. My mind was on a rampage, after all.

"… So? Does it feel good?" (Tamaki)

Yuina asked for my thoughts on her rubbing my back with a sponge. I definitely did not have a problem with it.

"Y-yeah… H-however, this is…" (Daichi)

"A-at any rate… don't mind it since I've seen it all… Just leave it to me." (Tamaki)

And then, she added more.

"Since I want to do this… be quiet and let me spoil you…" (Tamaki)

Winner: Instincts!

Because he only had a few strands of reasoning remaining right then, his male instincts took the lead and won the battle. It could be said that it was a perfect fight.

"Is this much strength alright?" (Tamaki)

"It's just right. There are no problems." (Daichi)

If there had to be a problem, it would be my 'son'.

That doesn't mean that we would do something indecent though.

I only came in to the bath in accordance with Yuina's demands. Indeed, occasionally something soft would brush against my back.

"I thought this earlier but… Daichi's… is big, huh." (Tamaki)

… Did she just say something indecent?

This is Yuina we're talking about here so she probably meant my back. I mean, I have a towel hung on my legs so that she can't see my front.

… Well, I'll just enjoy myself for now.

"… 'Kay, done… Now for the front?" (Tamaki)

"… I think that we should stop here because if you did that the effort we put into getting washed would be pointless, there is also the appointment with Miare. Don't you agree, Yuina-san?" (Daichi)

"… Your real intention is?" (Tamaki)

"I want to mess you up." (Daichi)

"So…Your self-control is… no good?" (Tamaki)

Yeah, I had no self-control.

Let's just say that because of that I couldn't resist Yuina's sweet temptation.

After that, we met up with Miare. When she noticed that we had reached that kind of a relationship she teased Yuina like a toy, but that's for another time.

◇◆◇◆◇◆◇◆◇◆◇◆◇◆◇◆

We merged with the group of three that had already left the dungeon, and pursued the group that had gone towards Gandarosu.

On the way Miare made Lily's group look human, and we were also made to look like other people.

So now what was the perpetrator of the only problem in this team? Sajima Nanami, but that was easily resolved.

I told Sajima my identity and my powers, that I killed Samejima, and that I was going to take revenge on the people that were left.

Shuri and Yuina also talked with her to try and persuade her, and it turned out that Sajima accepted it easily and became our comrade.

According to her, she wanted to be with Shuri and Yuina. Samejima's group suffered the consequences and she didn't mind.

Everything progressed too smoothly and I found it hard to swallow, but I had no reason to deny her.

I also had her show her actual status screen. Her magic specialization was the almighty Healer. Only, her special ability didn't focus on support.

I asked for Lily and Yuuma's opinion, but they said it wasn't suspicious.

"Please take care of me, Sajima." (Daichi)

"Yeah, if you get hurt leave it to me… At the same time, I'm sorry. I couldn't do anything…" (Nanami)

"Oh, don't worry about it. You never did anything to me… besides, the main culprit is dead." (Daichi)

"Okay… thank you. I'll do my best!" (Nanami)

Sajima Nanami's admission was decided in this way.

Under Lily's guidance, we arrived at Gandarosu after two days. Currently, we were in front of a large mansion after being led by Fuuko from meeting her at the city's entrance.

… Huh? Huh!?

"… Fuuko-san. What is with this mansion?" (Daichi)

I unintentionally stood upright because she secured this imposing property. Even though we have eleven people in all, we'll still probably live without inconvenience.

Three stories. Four rooms on the third floor, with two on the first floor. The second floor is considerably big and is the living area.

"Well, it's… it won't take long to explain so…" (Fuuko)

Fuuko told us that what happened while we weren't here.

First of all she went to find some real estate, and was told "No" when she requested a house for everyone to live in.

However, when Fuuko used『World Retrieval』, she found that there was a mansion, and it showed why the estate was concealed.

Listening to the reasons, the mansion was abandoned by a millionaire because a demon had settled down here and safety could only be guaranteed outside of its walls, so purchasing the estate was not recommended.

Fuuko immediately began negotiations.

It would be discounted if she drove out the demon. If they accepted the damaged real estate, a cleaning service would definitely be attached.

I could guess the result without hearing it just from seeing the tidy mansion.

“Is that so… Fuuko, you did well.” (Daichi)

“If possible could you caress my head as well… or… is that no good?” (Fuuko)

“That’s easy considering what you’ve done.” (Daichi)

I fulfilled Fuuko’s request and moved my hand to her well-maintained hair. She was smiling happily.

“Then, feel free to go inside!” (Fuuko)

Fuuko cheerfully opened the door, feeling satisfied.

What came into sight was–

“Welcome back, Katsuragi-sama~! I, Arianne, have sincerely awaited your arriva-fu-!?” (Arianne)

–the Bitch in a naked apron.

It couldn’t be helped that I hit her out of reflex from her trying to cling to me.

Annoying. Very annoying.

I can’t describe how annoyed I was.

We bought ingredients with a portion of the money that was planned to buy the house with and held the『Samejima’s Murder Celebration Party』.

Ranks were put aside for today.

Leadred and Lily opened ten bottles. Yuuma was also being a bad drunk and kept the two company. I didn’t think Leadred would be like that, but expected it for Lily.

That’s rare, I thought, as I reached my hand out to the arranged food on the table. The moment I tasted it, a question arose.

It was good. Just from the seasoning I could tell it was different from Shuri’s cooking.

Did Yuina, Fuuko, or Yuuma make it?

No. They were chatting happily.

Then who?

I anxiously shifted my attention from the living room to the attached kitchen.

“Ah, Katsuragi-sama. You’re looking this way… did you run out of food?” (Arianne)

While putting on a sugary voice, the Bitch appeared holding a pan.

You again…!?

I tsukkomi'd in my mind.

Her title changed from Slut to Joke Slut.

"Next time you boast too much, I'll slap you. How about following Selen's example a little?" (Daichi)

I compared her to the girl behind her holding a dish, supplying beverages.

"Selen is Selen, I am me. Don't worry. Rather, Katsuragi-sama! This dish is specialty!! I have confidence in it because I practiced it so that men would fall for me!" (Arianne)

Her reason for practicing was also bullshit. Come on, I've never seen someone like this…

However, I'm getting angry that her cooking is seriously delicious. It's vexing, but I think that I could eat all of it.

I noticed that the nearby foods like fried rice were quickly eaten.

"… Seconds." (Daichi)

"Yes! Oh, have me as well." (Arianne)

"I don't need that!!" (Daichi)

"Ow!?" (Arianne)

I threw my spoon at the Slut who just wouldn't give up. It hit her head splendidly… however, that Joke Slut had ingredients in the frying pan.

The piping hot ingredients flew towards me from the frying pan in her hand because of my attack.

Red, green, and yellow ingredients took flight. They were colorful vegetables. They were definitely heading towards us…

It goes without saying but after that a number of voices shouted out.

◇◆◇◆◇◆◇◆◇◆◇◆◇◆

Around the time those in the unlisted house in the neighborhood fell asleep from the merrymaking they had, rough breathing could be heard and stood out from the quiet and deep calm of the night.

A silhouette ran to the dungeon that did not have a lord.

The demons had been ordered to not allow anyone inside, but although they tried to defeat the person they were buried by the overwhelming difference in ability.

Without rest, she did nothing but head towards the bottom floor. For the sake of healing them.

And then, the girl arrived at the transfer magic formation, warping to her destination at once.

"… No abnormalities, alright."

She confirmed that there were no enemies nearby. She ran knowing that she was safe, sitting down in front of a fallen corpse.

Then, the intruder began to heal it.

Of course, it didn't work. At best it only healed the wounded and burned skin. It wasn't revived. This person would have to be a god or something.

"I did it…! Finally… I have a vessel…!"

Though humble, she raised a voice of joy.

That person embraced the corpse of the young man that was killed in revenge.

"With this… I can see you at last. It's been… so long… Oh, how I want to see you soon—"

Then, with a smile that seemed to melt in ecstasy, she muttered.

—Terias-sama.